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This dissertation entitled

**CREATING A CULTURE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNG
ADULTS IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
LEADERSHIP IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY**

written by

Delroy A. Brooks

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Missiology

has been read and approved by the following members of the

Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary.

Charles Fleming, Mentor

Elizabeth L. Glanville, Committee Member

January 2013

**CREATING A CULTURE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
YOUNG ADULTS IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
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By

Delroy A. Brooks

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the School of Intercultural Studies

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Brooks, Delroy A.

2013 “Creating a Culture for African American Young Adults in Seventh-Day Adventist Church Leadership in San Bernardino County.” Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies. Doctor of Missiology. 178 pp.

The history of youth ministry in the African American church in the U.S. has always had young adults leading and taking action. In San Bernardino African American churches, that is not the case. Reasons such as fear, pressure, and lack of peer group have kept many young adults from wanting to be in leadership in their local church. The local church should be the place where emerging adults can be valued, supported and developed. By using the human resource frame and the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, local churches can create a new paradigm for leadership transfer that includes and empowers emerging adults. This process of leadership should be reproducible and transferable to create a culture that breeds young adult leadership.

Mentor: Charles Fleming

121 words

DEDICATION

To Dilys, Micah, Matea, and every youth worker
who stuck around when everyone else left to find themselves

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first must thank God for allowing this journey to start. I sought Him when I wasn't sure if I was supposed to start a doctoral program. He has continued to say to me, like Joshua, "be strong and of good courage" when I doubted myself repeatedly. Any success in academia or otherwise must always be attributed to God's favor on me.

I thank my family, my wife who encouraged me often, rebuked me when necessary, and loved me through this whole process. She allowed me days to be by myself to catch up on work that needed to get done for this paper. I thank my kids for understanding when I couldn't go play because I had to do my homework.

I thank my mom for staying with us during a very critical time in the completion of this work, as well as the transition time that we had to endure as a family. Your help and assistance in the little things made this possible. I thank my dad for being extremely supporting and encouraging. I thank Sharon Starling and family for stepping in when my back was against the wall. Your assistance will never be forgotten, so go ahead and put this on your resume (smile).

I thank the young adults of the Valley Fellowship, 16th Street, Del Rosa, Acts II Faith, Rancho Cucamonga & African All Nations Adventist churches for their willing participation in my focus groups and interviews. I also thank the students of La Sierra University who showed up at the last minute for focus groups called by Pastor Sam on my behalf. Your assistance was immeasurable.

I thank the SECC for the opportunities to work in youth and young adult ministry in this great conference. I want to especially thank pastors Eric Penick, Robert Edwards,

Kurt & Andrea King, Wade Forde, and Baron Sovory for always being in my corner over the years, and Darriel Hoy for praying for secure wifi.

I thank my Village family, for the support and encouragement you have shown me through this process. I want to specifically thank “Uncle” D.P. Harris for making time for me to get my thoughts together and keeping me accountable. You believed I would “get it;” now, I do.

And to every youth pastor in an urban area or rural one, for that matter, what you do is incredibly important to the health and longevity of your church. Keep pressing and keep pushing. God has, indeed, called you for such time as this. Your church needs you and the young people you prepare for leadership.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SECC	South Eastern California Conference
GC	General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists
FYBY	For Youth By Youth

INTRODUCTION

I grew up in a Black church. Although we were Seventh Day Adventists, we were still emotive and emotional in our worship. We had all the trappings of mainline African American churches that worship on Sundays: a children's choir, youth choir, young adult choir, and the adult choir. Each choir represented a different segment of the church population. As I grew, I believed that what I saw exemplified in our choirs would also be expressed in the leadership of the church. You get older, you move from this choir to that choir. Youth were not barred from singing in the older choirs. As a matter of fact, we had to sing with the older choirs every Christmas and Thanksgiving. And, although we could sing with the older group, it would be many years before a young person or young adult would be allowed to lead the mass choir.

There was a piece missing then and a piece missing now as it relates to youth and young adults leading in our African American (Black) churches. There is an expectation to accomplish, yet no mechanism to foster that accomplishment. My own travel away from home and subsequent return to my church informs much of what I do in ministry and is the impetus of my desire to find what we may have been missing at my home church and many of the churches that I have been a part of now that I am located in sunny Southern California. We don't have as many choirs anymore. We still have the children; our youth have chosen work in the background; and our young adults are missing altogether.

My Journey

Along with my passion for youth ministry, music has always been a major part of my life. From learning piano, practicing guitar, and singing in some of those choirs that I referenced earlier, music has been pretty significant in my development as a person, pastor and, today, father. My experiences as a young adult leader are all filtered through musical experiences in my formative years. At thirteen, I joined a choir that had never existed in my church. A teenager saw that there were other teens who had some talent but were not old enough to be in the gospel choir and were too old for the children's choir. There was a lot of resistance in those days to a bunch of teens hanging out at the church, even though all we wanted to do was be in community, be accepted by our church family, and be supported in our activities. When I went to college, I was a part of another historical change: a student-led choir on the campus of the College. Prior to the forming of this group, all other choirs were under the auspices of student government or the school bureaucracy. This new choir, which still exists today, just wanted to be in community, be accepted by our school officially, and be supported in our activities. Throughout what we convey in this paper, I will frequently reflect on musical terms, just because music, like leadership, is an art (De Pree 2004, vii). I want to present a way that the music of young adult leadership can play in our urban churches in the SECC.

Youth Ministry in the Adventist Church

Youth ministry in the Adventist Church began with two teenagers, Luther Warren and Harry Fenner, ages fourteen and seventeen respectively who, in 1879, were

“concerned about the spiritual needs of their peers both inside and outside the church” (Adventists 2002, 12). Their desire for their peers led them to create the youth ministry arm of the church. They paved the way for youth ministry. What began with zeal seems to have lost its zest. Now we see young people leaving in droves. There are still some who remain. Those, like me, who never left. They’ve stuck around, got involved and became leaders. Was there something in our DNA that made us different? Is there anything to learn from those who stayed? My guess has always been there was a level of treatment of specific individuals, whether explicit or implicit, that let them feel like there was something that they could do. This method, however, has never been, to my knowledge, written down for duplication or broadened for systematic duplication.

Today, there is a disconnection between the youth and the leadership of the church. With fewer and fewer young people attending church (Dudley 2000, 32-34), there is created a hole in the membership where the young people used to be. With that, we are also seeing a growing generation gap in churches that impacts leadership and how youth are and are not transitioning into leadership at the local level. What used to be a natural occurrence changed somewhere. As a result, there are some problems that arise.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church in North America is in trouble. A recent survey states

The median age for Seventh-day Adventists in North America is 51. (All of the minor children of members are included in this data set and the calculation of the median age.) This compares to a median age of 36 in the United States and 35 in Canada [general population]. There is a significant trend toward the “graying of Adventism” in North America (Richardson 2008, 5).

Naturally, older members may have diminished physical capacity to engage in some of the tasks of church ministry. But, that is not all that is lost in the aging of the congregation. We also lose a critical leadership transfer or the trade from one generation to the next, when our youth check out after high school and the young adults are not involved. We have to admit that there is a problem. The question for me, then, becomes is there something that can be done in the church in general, and the African American church in particular, to stave off this “Graying of Adventism?”¹ What are the ways we can transition our existing youth and young adults into leadership that could infuse life and energy into all the aspects of the local church?

This exodus from the church among young people is not particular to African American Adventists. It affects many ethnicities and can erode the health of the church over time.

Further affecting the health and stability of the Church in years to come is the low likelihood of teen’s remaining churched. Barely one third of white and Hispanic teens, along with two-fifths of Black teens, say they are likely to continue to attend a Christian church in the near future, when they are living independent of their parents (Barna 2001, 113).

The North American Division of Seventh Day Adventists study mentioned earlier also made the following assertion:

The Adventist membership in North America is significantly more diverse than the general population. In fact, the ethnic profile of the Adventist membership is very close to what the U.S. Census projects for the American profile in 2030. Adventists are ahead of the curve.

It should be noted that this is due in part because of the success of the Regional Conferences. The Adventist presence in the black population in

¹ <http://www.atoday.org/article/360/blogs/sahlin-monte/2009/the-graying-of-adventism?search=Graying+of+Adventism>. Accessed September 2009.

the United States is two or three times greater than in other ethnic groups. It is not by accident that the most visible Seventh-day Adventists in American society are blacks (Richardson 2008, 14).

With an aging demographic, yet growing population of African Americans from varying parts of the Diaspora, it makes sense to be growing leaders that will take be equipped to handle the mantle of leadership when the time comes. I contend that missional leadership can be attained “in North American black and Hispanic churches where a strong family structure” (Sahlin 2003, 75) still exists. Many have not followed the North American trends as closely and their pattern of leadership and church based-operation was still largely in place (Allen 1995, 35).

The following table shows that the percentage of whites in the Adventist Church in North America has declined over the past two decades to about half the membership. At the same time, there has been significant growth among minority groups. The Adventist community in North America is on the threshold of a “majority minority” situation in which none of the four major ethnic segments will constitute a majority (Sahlin 2003, 13).

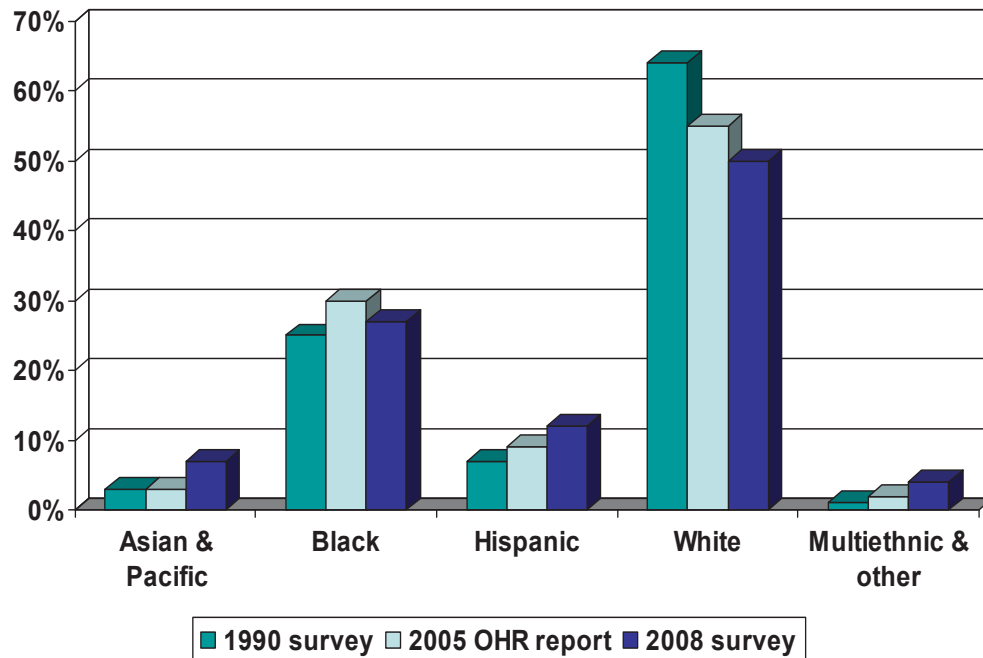


FIGURE 1

TRENDS IN ETHNICITY
(Richardson 2008:13)

Are the youth in our primarily African American churches being prepared for leadership? Have the challenges of urban living impacted how our young people transition to young adulthood and leadership within the church? The tough questions need to be asked of the church now. The willingness and ability of church leaders to talk intelligently and forthrightly about the emerging world will not relativize Christianity but will relevantize it (McNeal 2003, 131).

Purpose

To study urban young adults in predominantly African American Adventist churches to uncover why they do or do not accept leadership positions in the local church setting.

Goal

To provide local churches with a model or framework to successfully transition African American youth into leadership at the local church level in San Bernardino County.

Central Research Issue

The Central Research Issue is to investigate attitudes of Southern California's Adventist urban African American young adults towards taking responsible leadership in the local church.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of young adults toward inclusion in the Adventist local church structure?
2. What are the successful models of African American urban youth leadership (public/private/Adventist)?
3. How does emerging adulthood affect African American Adventist young adults' attitudes toward local church leadership?

Assumptions

I assume that African American Adventist churches in San Bernardino want to have their youth and young adults in leadership and prepared for leadership in the local church.

Definitions

Young adults are defined as people who are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine (Arnett 2004:19). Black Churches are churches where the membership is predominantly African American.

Leadership positions—These are volunteer positions voted by the church in business session, annually or bi-annually. These positions of leadership normally become ad hoc members of the church board.

Seventh-day Adventist—According to the church website, “The name Seventh-day Adventist includes vital beliefs for us as a Church. ‘Adventist’ reflects our passionate conviction in the nearness of the soon return (‘advent’) of Jesus. ‘Seventh-day’ refers to the Biblical Sabbath which from Creation has always been the seventh day of the week, or Saturday.”²

The *American Heritage Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* defines culture as “the sum of attitudes, customs and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another.

² Adventists 2009. <http://www.adventist.org/world-church/name-mission/index.html>. Accessed September 2009.

Culture is transmitted through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art from one generation to the next.”³

For the purposes of this paper, capacity will be defined as those attributes, strengths, or learned abilities that can be added to the life of the young adult to not only make them valuable to the local church specifically and, as a result, their community outside the church.

Missional—Related or connected to the youth ministry mission of the Adventist church: to lead youth to understand their worth, equip and empower youth for a life of service, and ensure the integration of youth into all aspects of church life and leadership they may be full participants in the mission of the church (Allen 1995, 7).

Delimitations

There are 138 churches in the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh Day Adventists. Of these, there are sixteen that are called “Black Churches.” Our research is limited to the five churches and two companies under the auspices of the Black Ministries department and in the San Bernardino County area. I will not be exploring, in detail, the effects of family dynamics or origin as they affect the decision to be involved in leadership at the local church level.

³ www.dictionary.com; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Culture>. Accessed September 2012.

Where This Research Fits

The research in this paper will be significant in providing information that can assist the local church in general, and the African American church specifically, to transition their existing young adults into positions of leadership, and not just leadership to take a position in church. We are looking at a return to missional leadership. Today, we see that there is a missional renaissance (McNeal 2009, no pp.) occurring among today's evangelical communities. The renaissance for the Adventist church would include developing young adult leaders within a church culture that was conducive and accepting of their leadership. Once leaders are developed, there would be a process for mentoring and developing the next set of leaders. It is this type of reproducible leadership that we are seeking to emulate and teach the youth and young adults of the Adventist church.

There is an undercurrent that can be felt in almost any church that you enter nowadays that seems to want to hearken to "days gone by" when things were "better," or when young people stayed in church because their parents told them to. The generations that should be coming into leadership in our churches are not there. The result are older leaders lasting longer, young leaders becoming burned out or even developing "elder brother syndrome" (Luke 15:28-30).

Typically, what is written about youth moving into leadership is from the standpoint of the person going into youth ministry. There is no transition curriculum or paradigm that would place emphasis on retaining, before we have to recapture. The study of youth being prepared to take the reins of church leadership is not widely written about

or researched, making this study a very significant one. The information will be significant for me in becoming a content expert in the field of youth ministry within the Seventh Day Adventist church and in the greater body of Christian writing in youth ministry.

Every church has an auxiliary for youth ministry, but in the churches that do not have a large number of youth or young adults, this person (or pastor) will be responsible for everything that affects the younger population of the church. Within the Black Ministries of the SECC, there is a fluctuating youth pastor population. Presently, of the seventeen churches listed in our directory, there are four youth pastors. Within the structure of the larger youth program, there are four events planned called FYBY (For Youth By Youth) and an annual Youth Camp Meeting program. Outside of the youth pastors, the churches have AY (Adventist Youth) leaders who oversee or run the youth program that would consist of Sabbath afternoon services to meet the spiritual, social, and leadership development needs of the youth in their churches. Thus, the goals of ministry to Adventist youth in the local church are:

- **To organize** the resource of youthful energy for active service to others.
- **To instruct** church youth leadership in the various methods of teaching theory and give them program techniques of ministry to help Adventist youth reach their goals.
- **To save** the children and youth of the church by leading them personally into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and by training them to share Christ happily and skillfully, realizing that “those who thus devote themselves to unselfish effort for the good of others are most surely working out their own salvation” (Steps to Christ, 80) (Adventists 2002, 11).

This part of the structure is not unique to the churches in the SECC, while FYBY is. FYBY was originally the brainchild of a former Associate Youth Director and his team approximately ten years ago. Its purpose was to bring the youth/young adult population of all the African American churches in the area together in order to facilitate fellowship and develop the next level of leaders. Over the last few years, FYBY was supposed to be handled by young people with the support of the youth pastors, but has been run by the pastors because of lack of involvement of the youth. But, it could also be that there is a lack of involvement from the youth because it is being run by the pastors. This program needs an update. Developing young adult leadership in the local church can be where we can make the most impact in changing the attitudes of youth and young adults toward leadership.

This paper is divided into three sections. Part I will include historical information about the development of youth and young adult ministry in the church, in general, and the Adventist church, in particular. This is followed in Part II by my data collection and analysis. Part III will contain my findings, recommendations, and a pilot program suggestion for creating a culture for young adult leadership development.

This paper will use interviews and focus groups to discuss the barriers that keep many young adults from active leadership in their local churches. I will use the Human Resource frame (Bolman and Deal 2008, 1439) as a framework to develop an environment where young adults can feel comfortable, and the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 291) to guide our capacity building.

Summary

An aging dominant culture population and an increase in minorities within the U.S. and, in turn, the Seventh-day Adventist church, make this an important time for youth ministry leadership development. Today, the African American Adventist churches in the U.S. are presented with a unique opportunity. The church has an opportunity to really be a part of the growing need for missional leadership within evangelical circles. With the established loss of young adults, we have the opportunity to ride some new trends or apply new insights to existing ideals in leadership development among young adults that I believe are sustainable and relevant.

PART I

**HISTORY AND CHALLENGES OF YOUTH
AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

In this section, I will review the historical record of youth and young adult ministry in America, its development in the African American church, in general, and the Adventist church, in particular. Within my review of the literature on the formation of youth ministry in the Adventist church, I will be searching for possible trends that are borne out of past research and attempting to identify if there are additional research areas that can be mined from the available literature. By no means is this an exhaustive review, but one that will be reviewed repeatedly over the course of my study.

A History of Youth Ministry

Youth ministry seems like a fairly new concept in many denominational circles, although one can go back to 1524 and hear Martin Luther addressing the civil magistrates of all the cities of Germany, saying, “I pray all of you for the sake of God and of youth, not to think slightingly of educational problems. For is a serious and great matter, at the heart of Christ and all mankind, that we help and advise young people” (Strommen et al. 2001, 27).

In September 1860 an incident of historical importance in the development of youth societies occurred: a young people’s prayer meeting was formed in Brooklyn’s Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church. Its format according to its pastor, Theodore Cuyler, was the highly successful prayer-meeting approach of the YMCA... When 40 youth and young adults signed the constitution he had developed, they agreed that the purpose of their society

should be the conversion of souls, the development of Christian character, and the training of new converts in religious work (Erb 1917; Strommen et al. 2001, 28).

The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) itself was founded in 1844 by George Williams for "the improving of the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades" (Denton 1963, 214).

This prayer-meeting style led to the establishment of the Christian Endeavor Society in 1881 by Dr. Francis Clark. Clark developed an organizational model for the youth of his congregation—one that was both highly structured and demanding. This model proved to be so successful in gaining members and developing intense loyalties that most church bodies soon adopted it (Strommen et al. 2001, 28).

Many other Protestant youth groups were affiliated with Christian Endeavor, yet others chose to develop societies of their own, such as the Epworth League, the Luther League, and Walther League. The Walther League was a catalyst in the process whereby Lutherans accommodated themselves to the American culture. Founded in 1893 with twelve societies, by 1929, the league had expanded to 1,607 societies.

From 1930 until its lingering demise between 1968 and 1977, the Walther League formed and educated Christians in a life-path of knowing and serving that was distinctively Lutheran, but it also assisted them in becoming members of an American mainline church (Pahl 2000, 20).

African American Youth Ministry is Urban Ministry

Reaching African American youth with Jesus' gospel of hope, freedom, and reconciliation begins with identifying the distinctive characteristics and challenges facing

youth ministry leaders who minister to these youth (Dunn and Senter 1997, 408). What is distinctive when working with an African-American population of youth and young adults? There is a perception that many who research or write about urban ministry are, indeed, writing about African American youth. I am among those who have fallen into that trap. Urban ministry is a term bandied about but can create confusion in the mind of the youth worker. We must move beyond viewing urban youth ministry as merely “working with inner-city kids” toward understanding the vast complex institutions that make up the metropolis (Larson and Free 2002, 15). The same can be said for young people who are involved in the “hip hop culture.” Hip hop (or rap music) is not solely an African American construct.

Now we know that rap music, and hip hop style as a whole, has utterly broken through from its ghetto roots to assert a lasting influence on American clothing, magazine, publishing, television, language, sexuality, and social policy as well as its obvious presence in records and movies... Advertisers, magazines, MTV, fashion companies, beer and soft drink manufacturers, and multimedia conglomerates like Time Warner have embraced hip hop as a way to reach not just black young people but all young people (George 1998, 15).

African-American youth have inherited a reservoir of spiritual and cultural experiences from which to draw their sense of identity as God’s people (Dunn and Senter 1997, 408). So, what is urban youth ministry?

For starters, urban youth ministry isn’t about dealing with one skin color or nationality. You’ll find that urban youth ministry is not so much about repairing buildings as building relationships (Sinsabaugh 2001, 14). Urban ministry, city church ministry, can include groups that span the ethnic divide, from mono to multi-cultural churches. As each differs, there are a few things that keep them altogether:

What Makes Urban Teens the Same (according to youth leaders)

- They are kids
- Their values are set by the media
- They are exposed to sex, violence, drugs
- They need to belong
- They are bored and apathetic
- They fear the future
- They are talented and creative
- They love pizza
- They need Jesus! (Sinsabaugh 2001, 15)

According to the 2000 census, the cities with the highest concentration of African Americans were New York, California, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Maryland, Michigan, and Louisiana. New York led all the nation's cities in this category. Chicago was second with 1.1 million, followed by Detroit; Philadelphia; Houston; Los Angeles; Baltimore; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington, D.C.; and, New Orleans. With the highest concentrations of African Americans in the urban cities of the United States (Census 2002), African American youth and young adult ministry to the cities has become synonymous with urban youth ministry.

Historical Accounts of African American Youth Ministry

Much of the socialization for children and youth occurs through the process of role modeling—observing, evaluating, emulating, and filing away for later use the behavior examples and values of others (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 312). This spiritual and cultural reservoir was filled with the experiences of African-Americans through slavery, Reconstruction, the Depression, and the civil rights movement. A theme that is felt historically throughout Black Churches has been the desire for freedom. In the chapter, “Forging Freedom,” in the book, *Youth Ministry in Modern America: 1930 to the*

Present, a historical timeline is created through the models of four types of youth ministries. These four types are traditional, corporate, kinship, and safe place.

The youth ministry at the Bethel A.M.E. Church, Baltimore Maryland, was the headquarters for the City-Wide Young People's Forum:

This agency, led by Juanita Jackson, who eventually became youth director for the NAACP, sponsored programs to “develop the intellectual and moral talents” of young African Americans... Along with members of the National Urban League, Bethel's youth “picketed and boycotted the city's chain stores, which refused to hire Negro clerks. They also protested segregation at the Enoch Pratt Public Library, and held mass meetings to demonstrate against (Mamiya 1994)” two Maryland lynchings in 1932 and 1933... Through such meetings, and through Sunday sermons and Scripture readings, young black Christians learned and practiced liberation theology at Bethel A.M.E. Church well before it was given a name as a movement within Christian theology (Pahl 2000, 75).

In subsequent years, Bethel's youth would also be involved in what would be termed “traditional” youth ministries activities, such as Bible study, prayer, and singing. During the 1950s and the 1960s, the young people of Bethel were called on to engage in a number of events; even the most “innocuous events held social significance” (Pahl 2000, 75). The young women were taught the value of their bodies by being enlisted in a fashion show. This was seen as a “significant cultural and theological affirmation” (Pahl 2000, 76). Bethel's youth were also taught about economic empowerment, desegregation, civil rights activism, and “that the life-path of freedom had practical as well as spiritual benefits” (Pahl 2000, 76).

Bethel's youth ministry from 1930 to 1970 showcased an active youth group led by adults who cared. They were taught to value their freedom and to “apply it from a community to which they feel connected” to change the world.

Where Bethel excelled in getting its young people on the life-path to freedom through civic activity, Grace Church sought freedom for its youth by establishing a place where they felt a sense of belonging, worship and the ability to be cultural critics.

The youth ministry of Grace Church, a Midwestern middle-class, and urban African American church employed the kinship model of youth ministry. From the out of print *Black and White styles of youth Ministry* by Seminary Professor William Myers, the Kinship Model centers on intergenerational, communal worship, and the empowerment of adolescents who can critique mainstream culture from a theological, African American stance (Pahl 2000, 81).

The corporate model of youth ministry normally has a youth pastor hired to run what many might call a ‘separate church.’ This type of youth ministry can create an ‘us vs. them’ type of ethos. It can also cause division within the church as young people seek to ‘have their own’ as opposed to contributing to the whole.

At the center of the kinship model of youth ministry at Grace has been the intentional involving of the young people in the worship life of the church. The pastor has read the report cards of young congregants from the pulpit, young people regularly read the lessons, and at least once a month, during Youth Sunday, youth have preached (Pahl 2000, 81).

“It takes a whole village to raise a child.” The truth and depth of this simple phrase has become a rallying cry for those concerned with the educational, spiritual, moral, and social needs of American children (Dunn and Senter 1997, 409).

Since the sixties, Grace church has sought the salvation of their youth not through civic and community endeavors, but through an intentional upholding of the African communal concepts married to keeping the youth engaged in worship. This is

exemplified in its credo to be both “unashamedly black” and “unapologetically Christian.”

The history of urban youth ministry is most notably rooted in the African American church, but is that the only place where young people can find rest or sanctuary? Historically, the lines between sacred and secular have been fluid in African-American communities (Pahl 2000, 84). Some churches have gone the road less travelled and sought to partner with community and begin nonprofit agencies. These urban sanctuaries have sought to be respites for youth with no spiritual strings attached. One such agency is BEST—Building Educational Strategies for Teens.

BEST began in 1965 as a special youth ministry program of a congregation situated in a heavily African-American section of a Midwestern city. It began as a nonprofit organization that received funding initially from the church, but now receives funds from a broad based network of grassroots, corporate, governmental, foundation, and individual donors. BEST provides a sanctuary for inner city young people.

Everyday life at BEST in many ways resembles the typical family as many Americans imagine it. Youngsters come in after school, get themselves a snack (from the machines in the entry hall), do their homework at tables with their “brothers and sisters,” take breaks to play games or work on special projects, and occasionally settle down with staff or other members of serious talk about long-range plans for a Saturday visit to the museum, the zoo, a big game or even for college or travel. While focused as an educational program, BEST provides both personal and academic resources as well as broadening experiences for the children and youth who come to the afterschool activities and to summer day camp (Pahl 2000, 85).

BEST employed what is described in the next chapter as the safe place model (Dunn and Senter 1997, 186). Within our four types of youth ministry (traditional, corporate, kinship, safe place), these three historical models (Bethel, Grace, BEST) of

African American youth ministry exemplify what is generally seen in the Black Church. There is either a strong emphasis on the civic duty of the African American youth to be involved in the community because of the many ills of society which seem to affect those of African descent disproportionately to the dominant culture. Or, there is a strong emphasis on what is termed ‘in-reach’—preparing the existing youth base to learn how to function within the church paradigm, ultimately preparing them for life.

Within the Adventist churches studied within San Bernardino County, all the black churches have ministries dedicated to community service. These auxiliaries do not define the ethos of the individual churches, but act as an active arm of the ministry of the church. Every community service department is entrusted with the task of defining how the church can serve the community and what kind of community resource the church can become. In trying to live out the Salvation and Service credo of Adventist youth ministry, there needs to be a facility to marry both civic action and in-reach. Is there room to teach missional values within the culture of the already existing ministry or should we be concentrating on building something else?

In the past years, we have seen success in youth ministry coincide with young people being active in the community endeavors and standing for justice. Today, we find a push for justice in some places and curriculum based on the 2007 book, “Deep Justice in a Broken World: Helping Your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs Around Them” by C. Clark and K. E. Powell. Can our search for leadership models hinge on how active a youth group is in their community? While there are some definitive gains in the development in youth ministry paradigms throughout U.S. church history, over time there

have developed some specific barriers to the growth of urban youth and young adult ministry.

Youth Ministry in the Adventist Church

The historical information for the foundation of youth ministry in the Adventist church can be found in a few books. Authors and historians of the Adventist church are many, but few speak clearly about the history of youth ministry. Even fewer when it comes to youth ministry in the African American context. Authors whom we will review and seek guidance include George R. Knight, A. Barry Gane, Malcolm Allen, Ellen G. White, Roger Dudley, and some others who contribute to the history by way of their doctoral work.

The movement that would become the Adventist church in the latter portion of the 19th century began with its roots in the Anabaptist and Methodist traditions. Originally known as Millerites after the itinerant preacher and Bible scholar William Miller, these ardent students of Scripture believed, as many did in their day, that it was possible to determine the day of Jesus' 2nd Coming. This led them to the day that is now known as the Great Disappointment, October 22, 1844.

After the Great Disappointment of 1844, this relatively young group of Adventist believers continued to study the Bible in earnest for some sign of God's leading (Knight 1993, 27). From its earliest days, the Seventh-day Adventist church has grown and flourished because of the ministry, dedication, and missionary zeal of its youth. Many of the church's pioneers were young people at its founding and have shouldered the responsibility ever since (Gane 1997, 14). The first 40 years of Adventist ministry,

1840-1880, it was taken for granted that youth were a part of the church (Allen 1995, 27). Development of organized youth ministry never entered into the minds of leadership until after the mission of Fenner and Warren, then teenagers themselves, and would not be official until 1908 (Allen 1995, 29).

The mission for Fenner and Warren, as leaders, was to go and reach their friends. Today, we want our young adults to bring their friends to a church that values them as people and will develop them to be leaders. The mission is challenged because of several barriers that hinder the growth of youth and young adult ministry in the local church.

Barriers to Urban Youth Ministry

There can be many challenges in attempting to win urban youth and young adults to Christ in youth ministry. According to *Youth Ministry in City Churches* (Roehlkepartain 1989, 102), there are four overarching barriers:

- Churches lack motivation—Because of the energy and time commitment that is necessary to win urban youth, a church that is not passionate about seeing youth and young adults won to Christ is in danger of falling into a malaise of doing the same things, getting the same results, then criticizing the culture of young people for not coming to the Church. Feelings of failure keep many churches from being consistent in their outreach to urban youth and young adults.
- Teenagers don't feel comfortable—When teenagers don't feel comfortable, they may be apathetic to Church. When they are not comfortable as teenagers, they become young adults who are nomads, they walk away from church engagement but still consider themselves Christian (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 318).
- Common youth ministry models don't apply—What works in homogenous settings doesn't always work or translate properly in the urban settings. Lack of properly trained youth/young adult leaders attempting to use one-size-fits-most youth ministry models realize that they need to seek out more creative models that fit in the urban context.

- Few quality resources available—There are not as many authors/pastors/teachers writing about how to not only practice youth/young adult ministry in decidedly urban contexts and, among those, even fewer writing about leadership development for young adults in the local church.

In Black churches and communities, the prevailing challenge is that of the underclass. This segment of the black populace is said to “make up one third of all black families” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 321). Other challenges that are specific to Blacks and Blacks in the inner city include (1) the rise of the unchurched population; (2) the ambivalence of racial identity; and, (3) an increase in the number of blacks (males in particular) that are incarcerated.

Among the four basic youth ministry life-paths promoted by Pahl, these are the barriers or common problems:

1. The problem of private and public theologies (Pahl 2000, 106-109). The power of “civic faith” to disrupt, if not destroy, authentic Christian faith among youth. The private faiths of African Americans were susceptible to the corrosive power of modern marketed culture on the one hand, and the hegemonic power of the state on the other. All four historical settings of youth ministry demonstrated leaders and youth alike struggling to identify the appropriate intersections and interpenetrations of the private faiths of Christians and the public possibilities of American culture. For African Americans, this problem crystallized over the issue of violence. The violence facing African Americans was immediate and closer to home. That these youth were being asked to die for freedoms abroad that they did not experience at home occurred to more than one African American observer. So, they took that fact to the streets with them to struggle nonviolently, to turn their private faith into public law. Today, the marketed

culture that is glorified in the media is of young men as hustlers and pimps, while young ladies have to war against the urban stereotypes of loose living exemplified in provocative and suggestive clothing. The hip hop culture, while varied in its forms, is one major vehicle that the media now employs to sell a lifestyle that is incongruous to that of the church-going young adult.

2. The problem of volunteer programs (Pahl 2000, 109-112) was the fact that they were all “volunteer programs.” It was the will of the youth to participate. For the African American youth, the choices available to middle-class youth multiplied, while the need for choices among the urban underclass intensified.

3. The problem of becoming and belonging (Pahl 2000, 112-114). The rise of youth ministry is, on one level, a response to adolescent flight and a strategy to enlist belonging. The “four” (traditional, corporate, kinship, civic/kinship hybrid or safe place) were rarely so upfront about their purpose and, in many ways, they also contributed to the general cultural understanding of adolescence as a time of becoming. African Americans held the tension together best, conjuring Christianity by becoming Christians, but belonging to a community of people who also asserted that they belonged to more than just America. In the black church, however, young adults are increasingly finding other avenues of becoming and belonging more attractive than churches. These groups can be defined by what they have in common or who they consistently spend time with. They are termed exiles. They are still invested in their Christian faith but feel stuck (or lost) between culture and the church (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 330).

4. From purity to practices (Pahl 2000, 114-116). The Christian life demands such a movement from purity to practices; the gospel stories of Jesus’ life are rendered

moot without it. The move is not easy. African Americans have kept pace best—both drawing upon the depths of conjuring Christianity and dressing the message in the idioms and styles of modernity. In any case, the movements came closest to each other when they were truest to their own visions, while also attending mindfully to the realities of modern America.

In short, we see that the “common” problems that existed in general with youth ministry take particularly potent and different nuances when placed in the context of African American culture in America. Lincoln and Mamiya’s barriers take into account the incarcerated, which continues to be a problem in this country today. These other themes contrast in a way with Roehlkepartain, who is specifically writing about city churches. He struggles with not wanting to offend in his terminology, claiming “the word ‘urban,’ for example, carries with it a great deal of baggage. Even more sensitive is the issue of identifying various groups of people, whether by income or by racial or ethnic background.”

Adventist Youth Ministry Challenges in the 21st Century

With the exception of Fitzgerald, the models of youth ministry that are borne within the Adventist church were written in the previous century and may miss some of the generational nuances that have come about with the increase of knowledge, greater dependence and the use of the internet and media, a population that is not that impressed with the church or the things of God.

In many ways, youth ministry faces similar challenges to those faced in the days of Luther Warren and Harry Fenner. Adolescents and young adults, now as then, are going through a time of tremendous changes and

choices in their lives... The world of the early twenty-first century operates on different assumptions than did the world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries... But society has also changed at a deeper and more basic level: there has been a significant shift in most people's worldview, the way they perceive truth... Our youth are growing up in a society that emphasizes tolerance and acceptance of everyone's views, everyone's ideas as a primary value (Adventists 2002, 14).

These challenges are not entirely bad things. It allows our young people to be willing to engage others in a way that we have not had in the past. Some other challenges that rise when dealing with urban Adventists, more of the young people do not live in the communities where our churches reside. So, although they may share in some of the challenges of urban youth by virtue of their age, they are not familiar with what may be a function of the community where they worship.

Even in an area where young people are open to share the gospel with a community member who may share in the same struggles by virtue of their age, they do not, however, connect on the more basic level of the community. To further complicate matters, youth—even committed Christian youth—are far less likely to see biblical values and standards as absolutes that apply to everyone in every situation (Adventists 2002, 14).

Another challenge in the 21st century is the lack of Adventist scholarship in the field of youth ministry. It is my desire to open the door for additional research in this specific field, as well as contribute to the growing conversation on missional youth leadership, emerging church movement, and the challenge of losing our young adults. This scholarship is now being enhanced by annual gatherings formerly called the 180 Symposium, now called the E. L. Minchin—REASON Symposium. The symposium

compiles the articles and papers submitted by current youth and young adult professionals into an edited book that is sold through AdventSource.

Youth and Young Adults are Leaving

Before *UnChristian* (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007) was making the rounds of the evangelical circuit, the Adventist church embarked on a daunting 10-year study called “Valuegenesis” (Brantley 1993). From this research came a book based on the study, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church*, authored by Roger Dudley (Dudley 2000). Using the stories from 1,500 Adventist young people, he determined that there are some factors that are causing our youth and young adults to walk away from the Adventist church and, in many instances, from faith altogether. Most aren’t leaving the church because of a dispute with doctrine but are confused by the tension between the truth of Adventism and the way they see it lived out by the older members of their congregations (Dudley 2000, 61).

What was discovered through a diligent review of the respondents in the survey were a number of themes that dominate the answers given:

- Alienation—They feel unaccepted by their churches; some felt as if they were not needed or valued by their churches (Dudley 2000, 61-62).
- Irrelevance—They perceive the church as either not interested or simply clueless to their generation’s needs (Dudley 2000, 62-64).
- Intolerance—A common theme among many of the dropouts involves sensitivity to and distaste for the intolerant attitudes they perceive in the church. A number feel very uncomfortable with the image they see their church projecting as the only true church that is “holier than thou” (Dudley 2000, 64-65).

- Convenience—the church was not convenient for those who lived fast-paced lives. A number expressed their urge to recoup and sleep in on Sabbath mornings (Dudley 2000, 65).
- Minor themes—Premarital pregnancy resulting in the church asking them to leave; interpersonal conflicts; others revealed they were in a stage of rebellion and experimentation because of the strictness of their upbringing (Dudley 2000, 65-66).

The work done in *UnChristian* (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007) mirrors some of these themes, but it was not to find out why young people leave, but rather why those on the outside of the Christian faith (those termed outsiders in the book) are not willing to come in. There is an interesting juxtaposition that takes place when looking at these two books. While they both involve issues of young adults and the church, Dudley's looks at Adventists specifically, while Kinnaman looks at those who claim anything but Christianity for the most part. These people are referred to as the un-churched. Kinnaman deals with two generations (Busters and Mosaics) while Dudley's work primarily follows the Busters.

As we continue to seek out research on this demographic, any information that we can gain from the Center for Creative Ministry (an Adventist Research group) will prove important. It is my hope that this research can spark further research on a larger scale within this denomination.

Summary

Youth ministry within the African American churches in the US has always provided leadership development in the context of civic activity. Where civic activity has diminished, in urban areas, the church has not been able to successfully fill the void.

There are definite issues to be overcome within the urban African American Church as it relates to youth ministry. Moreover, within the Adventist church, these same realities abound. Yet, there is not much scholarship to prove, refute, or lead the conversation in another direction; one more reason to be involved in the research of African American youth leadership. The Christian education system was the place where leadership could be transferred, taught and caught. There is research currently being done in the Adventist educational system (www.CognitiveGenesis.com). That research does not address the local church, in general, or the African American church, in particular.

Because of changes in time and culture, an updated theology for youth and young adult ministry has been adopted. This theology is all about the kingdom of God. The youth and young adult ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist church is supposed to prepare, present, and participate in the kingdom of God. This new or updated paradigm still has to contend with the existing challenges for developing leader in our churches. Research and continual dialogue among scholars can assist in developing models that can assist in leadership growth. These additional models are being developed and written about through the 180^o Symposium and the E.L. Minchin—REASON Symposium. This dissertation will be added to that now growing scholarship.

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND MODELS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Let us look at the factors that will allow urban young adults to participate in local church leadership. In this chapter, I will review what various sources say about youth, young adults, and leadership in general. I review urban leadership, in particular, and investigate whether or not there is anything written about young adults and leadership within Adventist scholarship. I will also review various youth and young adult ministry models.

Youth and young adult ministry models vary based on the culture and location of said ministry. I will look at the basis of many urban youth ministry paradigms and I will contrast and compare models of youth ministry in general. I will also review Adventist in particular. I will also review models that are particular to urban situations. I will talk about existing doors of access to young adults in San Bernardino.

Urban Youth Leadership

In the large amounts of youth ministry material available, not much has been written about urban youth leadership. In addition, not much has been written on developing youth and young adults for church leadership. There is, however, a wealth of information on leading youth and young adults in ministry, or programming for youth

and young adults. The reason for this is that the urban young adults do not exist. This is not to say that young adults in urban situations or cities aren't visible but, from the research that exists, in most instances, authors are writing to prepare people who already may be in ministry. The other category is volunteers that would be assisting at the local church level. Books such as *Raising Up Young Heroes* (Smith 2004), *Grace Based Youth Ministry* (Hill 2004), *Black Young Adults: How to Reach Them, What to Teach Them* (McCray 1992), and *Hip Hop Church* (Smith and Jackson 2005) frame the discussion on inner-city youth leadership.

There are specific outcomes that are expected within each urban youth ministry paradigm:

- To stir the consciousness of African-Americans as to the importance of discipling and evangelizing youths and college students (Copeland 1995, 139);
- To challenge adults to disciple biblically (Copeland 1995, 144);
- To suggest that we put performance indicators in place (Copeland 1995, 149);
- To evaluate our efforts (Copeland 1995, 152);
- To offer resources to aid in discipling and evangelizing (Copeland 1995, 155).

In the earliest parts of the 20th century, there was a desire to see our young adults take active leadership. One of the greatest needs of the church is a consecrated and intelligent lay leadership... we have a right to expect that college graduates will assume large leadership in the churches to which they belong, and that the Christian colleges and the Christian programs in connection with state universities shall prepare them specifically for this task (Stock and Shaver 1933, 147).

Ministry to this group and those of their demographic was to include:

- A presentation of religion from the pulpit...shall give young people a clear understanding of the meaning of Christianity;
- An experience of worship which shall feed the inner life, so that the propelling power of Christianity will move them to a selfless expression of the gospel of Jesus in church and community life after college;
- A program of service in behalf of social righteousness which shall send these students into adult responsibilities committed to the high purposes of Jesus Christ, and shall make them restless and intelligent disciples of the Master, imparting his convictions and quality of life to children and youth;
- A fellowship with other Christians which shall exalt the church as an institution through which the gospel of Jesus shall be meditated.

Stock and Shaver document what youth leadership was in the context of denominational and interdenominational groups training young people through the Christian education system, identifying ways in which leadership can be transferred, taught, and caught. Good leadership just doesn't happen. It has to be cultivated and developed. The church seriously working at youth ministry will be working at developing leadership skills among youth (Courtoy and Kolb 1971, 57).

Courtoy and Kolb have a simple model used in the United Methodist Church which guides us on a continuum of teen to late teen activity as it relates to church involvement. In the Leadership Transfer model (Fig. 2), we see an increased level of responsibility being placed on the youth as they pass through phases of adolescence.

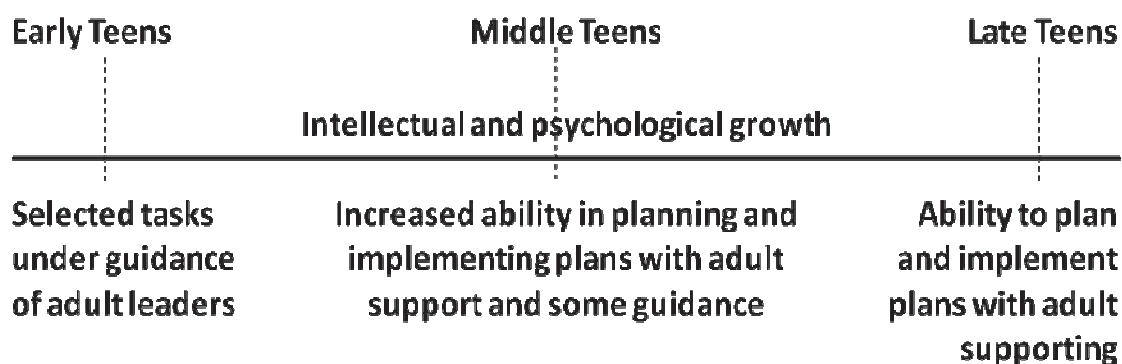


FIGURE 2

LEADERSHIP TRANSFER MODEL

(Courtoy and Kolb 1971, 55)

In addition to the above model for ministry, the most important aspect to share with young believers is *koinonia*. The church is the community of acceptance, ministry, and corporate action. But, no adult can help a young person enter into a caring, covenanting community, unless he or she is a part of a caring, covenanting community, too (Ng 1984, 73).

Many of our youth groups, clubs, and para-church ministries have done events well, but have not excelled in community building. Young people naturally gravitate to the charismatic and outgoing leader who has the awesome programs and music, but leave not having grown in their character or developing their leadership traits. Other times, they grow up in the youth group, have fun, but are never encouraged to lead in any other aspect of church ministry. Some suggest that this can be achieved through mission trips. Although that is not the focus of this study, the idea of leadership development through the use of mission trips specifically for urban youth is intriguing and can be further

researched in post-doctorate work. My study is specific to the local church and its role in the development of young adult leaders.

The key to a youth ministry that actively moves on the Word of God is to have an environment in which leadership from young people is affirmed. Youth leaders may say they want youth to take leadership but, when they see it in action, they often have a different feeling (Smith 2004, 77). It will always feel uncomfortable to know that there is supposed to be someone to take your place but, that is the circle of life, to borrow a phrase from “The Lion King.” What we should be striving for in youth and young adult ministries is a circle of leaders.

A Circle of Leaders

During my experience over the past fourteen years in youth ministry, both professionally and as a volunteer, I have found that youth leaders tend not to look for their replacement, but someone who can make their load a little lighter. Then, by default, there may be a transfer of leadership, whether by the leader moving on or away, but, at no time was there a formal transfer. Now you have a new leader in a position they were never really prepared for. As a result, their tenure in the position will be limited, barring someone pouring into them as a mentor.

I have been fortunate to be able to hand off leadership to young men and women in whom I saw leadership potential. Some were willing and others not so willing. The key was that I told them I was available to them for all their questions to be answered, and that I wanted to see them do a better job than I did.

The desire to see another leader rise to take the place of current leadership needs to be in the fabric of the local church culture. When we take the time to learn the needs of our youth and young adults, the church will never be in want for new leaders. What is needed is a young adult ministry model that will take into account the needs of the current generation of emerging adults and integrate them with those of the church in general.

Developing Adventist Youth Ministry Models

Youth ministry models provide structure for ministry. A model indicates place, purpose, and process for ministry (Evangelism 2011, ix). There are three main categories that youth ministry within the Adventist churches would fall into: incarnational, historical, and relational. Another subset could be major event ministry, but that is not particular to Adventism, thus, it will not be a part of this review.

An early mentor of mine in youth ministry, Dr. A. Barry Gane, proposed that the incarnation of Christ be in the life of the leader.

To incarnate Jesus in this world, we Christians must experience an inner transformation in which we not only behave as Jesus behaved, but also share His love, His valuing of persons, His compassion, and His zeal for justice and righteousness. This character, stamped indelibly on our hearts and minds, will be read by all (2 Cor. 3:2). The incarnation of Jesus in the LAOS (people) of God is to be an incarnation of God's love in personal relationships (Gane 1997, 54).

In essence, in every interaction, we should be asking the question, "What would Jesus do?" An understanding of the characteristics of youth and young adults is important to developing a foundation for youth and young adult ministry. To address the needs of young people at varying stages of their growth, it is important to understand what those

needs are. For the purposes of this paper, we will only use a portion of the figure that he cites from Jan Johnson, Kids Developmental Needs:

TABLE 1
THE NEEDS OF 15-17 YEAR OLDS
(Gane 1997, 46-47)

Intellectual	Emotional	Physical	Social	Spiritual
They organize, evaluate and make choices	They're independent	They're curious about sex, especially pornography and masturbation	They're more independent	They branch out and serve on their own
They have verbal skills	They can have emotional outbursts	They experience rapid physical growth, ravenous hunger and exhaustion	They want more freedom	They can apply skills learned in bible study
They want to use their talents	They want acceptance		They don't want to share themselves & develop friendships	They are defining their beliefs and convictions
They're curious	They're forming personal identity and may try new identities to see how they feel.		They're loyal	
They look for recognition			They need to practice Christian principles in a non-threatening atmosphere	

TABLE 2
THE NEEDS OF 18-25 YEAR OLDS
(Gane 1997, 46-47)

Intellectual	Emotional	Physical	Social	Spiritual
They are interested in social issues	They want intimacy with others	They are looking for their sexual identity	They want autonomy	They are developing and implementing values & sorting out values they have been exposed to
They want to develop knowledge & skills	They are more expressive in relationships	They want to adopt sexual values that mirror their value system	They have moved from dependence to independence, but are still interdependent	They are learning how to use leisure time in light of their values
They are making initial career choices They are becoming more expressive, open to newness			They make friends with different types of people They want to learn about romantic commitments, "When should I marry?"	
They think more deeply clarifying their beliefs				

Adolescence is an age of wide horizons and great possibilities. In times past, the Holy Spirit has worked marvelously through the lives of committed youth. May our insights into the need for a special youth ministry in twentieth century Adventism help to allow that same Spirit to work in and through the youth of our church in our day (Gane 1997, 48).

In contrast to Gane's incarnational youth ministry, Malcolm Allen reflects on a historical model of youth ministry promoted in the early 20th century, the Elijah

message. The Elijah message, Allen asserts, is important and fundamental to the Church.

The Elijah message (Allen 1995, 9):

1. Is a prophetic message. A message of warning that is intended to be given just before the coming of the Lord. It is the same everlasting gospel found in Revelation 14.
2. Is a full message. It is intended to restore the truths of God. Doctrinal truths are to be explored and shared.
3. Must be a youth message. A remnant church with an “Elijah message” must be a church that is relevant to young people.

How do both the Elijah message and the incarnational model meet the basic philosophy of the Adventist Church that says youth ministry is one of “Salvation and Service?” Our twin goals are to lead youth into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to train them for service to others (Adventists 2002, 12). Our approach to youth and young adult ministry should be able to incorporate giving young people the tools to lead: leading others to Christ and leading our friends in service, thus, meeting the ethos of Salvation and Service.

Troy Fitzgerald adds to Gane’s incarnational approach to youth ministry with a philosophy of youth ministry based on seven essential benchmarks or ships that foster enduring growth for young people:

1. Relationship
2. Fellowship
3. Worship
4. Discipleship
5. Leadership
6. Ownership
7. Mentorship (Fitzgerald 2006, ix-x)

Fitzgerald uses the aforementioned “ships” to launch youth ministry “out of the shipyard” (Fitzgerald 2006). His approach is meant to build a lasting connection for youth leaders who may not have all of the tools typically thought of as necessary to lead youth and young adults.

His philosophy takes into account that many who work with youth and young adults are volunteers with limited time. This philosophy is closest to what I may find in relation to building leaders out of urban Adventist youth. This approach does not take into account any differences, whether they are ethnic, socio-economic, or location.

Where these approaches start to deviate from one another is the information needed to lead the youth. Gane promotes the leader having spent some time in the research of the youth, while Allen asserts “Leadership in Adventist youth Ministry has more to do with the impact of religion and Christianity reflected in your own life, than all the absorption and interpretation of the mechanics of leadership and youth psychology” (Allen 1995, 25).

To his credit, Allen comes back to a more even tone when he reflects that Youth Ministry will mean nothing if it is negated by the influence of the life (Allen 1995, 25) of the leader. Gane maintains that the Leader should be living as Jesus would if He were here in the flesh, demonstrate acceptance, and practice nearness. When we model the Christian lifestyle, we are showing youth the real-life application and the meaning of words like “love,” “servanthood,” and “obedience” (Gane 1997, 69).

In the 21st century, can Adventist youth ministry continue to promote the tenets of the Elijah message while showing people Jesus and developing relationships that last? Moreover, how are the relationships which are created impacted by the culture of the

city? There are some specific values in the 21st century iterations of youth ministry that have created barriers to developing leadership among young adults.

Adventist Young Adult Ministry Models

During the 21st century, we are charting the shift from what was traditional youth ministry to adding young adult ministry under the youth ministry banner. Young adult ministry often proves to be more vague since it seeks to be different from youth ministry (whatever that is supposed to be). With a more mobile, independent and transitory group, any “model” easily fluctuates from leader to leader, from week to week (Evangelism 2011, viii). In the year 2010, a number of youth and young adult ministry professionals from across the North American Division descended on the Andrews University campus in Southwestern Michigan to put together ideas of young adult ministry that created a theology for Adventist Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

This theology does not negate what Gane, Allen, and Fitzgerald presented earlier. What it does do, however, is re-present the focus of youth and young adult ministry for the next generation, reflecting the changes in culture, the next generation, and our churches.

This updated theology articulated for youth and young adults is the following: Seventh-day Adventist youth and young adult ministry find its calling in the kingdom of God. It prepares, presents, and participates in the kingdom of God (Evangelism 2011, 3). What does that mean? It means that, as youth and young adults, we are to get youth and young adults ready for the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not of this world, but it is in the world. It is near, coming, present, within us and beyond us. It calls us and it sends us. It is already here, and yet it is still to come. It is the presence of God Himself.

Prepare—Like John the Baptist, we prepare others as well as ourselves for the kingdom of God. The status quo must change. We live in anticipation of Christ's coming.

Present—The love of Christ compels us to share the good news that the kingdom of God is already here in God's goodness, and yet it is also coming in God's glory.

Participate—When we respond to Christ's invitation, we become citizens of the kingdom of God. Our new identity places us into something much bigger than ourselves or our previous world (Evangelism 2011, 3).

This next group of models encompass the breadth of youth ministry in the U.S. since models were first identified in Youth Education (Dunn and Senter 1997) in the Church.

A. The Christian school model builds young people into well-rounded Christian adults. It accomplishes this by using the Christian high school like a social, academic, and spiritual laboratory. This laboratory is shaped by a Christian worldview, in order that, as adults, the graduates will live as Christians in a non-Christian world (Dunn and Senter 1997, 165-166)

B. The Competition model uses natural leaders from the high school society, trained to serve as servants and motivators to their teams in the context of team competition, to attract and hold high students for an articulate confrontation with biblical truth, both in a large group setting and in smaller discipleship groups (Dunn and Senter 1997, 169-171).

C. The Discipleship model trains students to be God's people in an ungodly world, equipped with Bible study and prayer skills developed in a caring atmosphere with a view to reproducing their Christian lives in others (Dunn and Senter 1997, 174-176).

D. The Ministry model develops student ministry skills and a context in which to use those skills through carefully planned exposure to human and spiritual needs outside the cultural context of the church, enhanced through meeting similar needs in the community surrounding the church and supported by accountability groups within the youth group (Dunn and Senter 1997, 179-181).

E. The Safe Place model uses the equipment and facilities of the church or youth center in conjunction with the presence of loving Christian adults who have earned the right to be heard in the world of the students who are at risk. Those adults then have the opportunity to reach the kids and build spiritually accountable relationships with them. The context is a sustained contact with mature Christians at a local church or youth center (Dunn and Senter 1997, 184-186).

Despite the fact that there are specific models of traditional youth ministry, more often than not, it is not as clear cut. Depending on whether there is a strong Youth Leader or Youth Pastor, many ministries may blend elements from 2 or more of the models available, as the needs arise. Models “A” and “B” only exist within churches that have church schools or academies attached to them. Models “C,” “D,” and “E” are almost interchangeable, depending on the program of the week for the youth.

With the basic models outlined, there are still some other models that are emerging. Senter continues with the following submissions: family based youth ministry, the high school subpopulation model, the meta model, and Youth church model.

A. In the family based model, parents, aided by their faith communities, guide their children to intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual maturity while using

their distinctive giftedness to witness to the broader community of adolescents and their families.

B. In the high school subpopulation model, Christian adults with similar interests or backgrounds to youth within specific subpopulations of adolescent society, discover a means by which to build relationships with that group of people and share both a love for the common interest and a love for Jesus Christ. The desire is to elicit an interest in spiritual matters that might lead the young person to faith in Jesus Christ and participation in the believing community.

C. In the meta model, adult and student leaders equip and empower caring Christian cell groups to multiply in amoeba-like fashion in order to create an expanding network of friendship clusters in which students share their lives with each other and discuss the life of Christ with spiritually open peers.

D. In the youth church model, the youth minister and the spiritually gifted and qualified adults prepare young people to be spiritual leaders by taking responsibility to establish a new church, either within an existing church, or as a spin-off of a church that seeks to plant a new church. It could be the logical outcome of the ministry of a para-church organization.

From the 180 Symposium, a top ten list of youth and young adult ministry models emerged. A wide range of practicing youth and young adult professionals within the Adventist church submitted these models.

Seventh-Day Adventist Top Ten

As mentioned earlier, from the 180 Symposium, a top ten list of successful youth and young adult ministry models were compiled. Some of these mirrored the papers that were submitted prior to the symposium.

1. The Lost and Found Model believes that every human being is lost and that God seeks to find every lost person. This model incorporates all of the community's gifts of faith to reach those who are lost. Celebrations for every found person and sadness for every lost one causes this model to function like a roller coaster. It can create an "us" versus "them" type of atmosphere.

2. The Wholistic Worship Model—All of life can be found in worship to God. God doesn't just show up at church but is present in all mundane activities. An awareness of holy ground impacts how we treat others at all times and in every situation.

3. The Discipleship Model—Discipleship is a journey and, as such, it requires that we come alongside others—teaching, listening, growing, communicating, and learning. People act as models for mentees. Discipleship finds its root in discipline. Learning spiritual practices, as well as choosing and planning for growth, are the tenets of this model.

4. The Family Based Model—Congregations empower families to provide religious instruction, worship experiences, service activities, and social interaction rather than separating for age specific programming. This creates a positive family dynamic for those who may not experience one naturally.

5. The Missional Model—Based on the Gospel Commission and the promise from God to equip his people to fulfill it, this model expects and encourages youth and young adults to share the gospel—now.

6. The Social Advocacy Model—This moves from short-term acts of service to embrace justice. This requires an entrance into the world of the marginalized, living with them, and changing the systems that keep them marginalized.

7. The Small Groups Model—This model stands in contrast to the idea of “bigger is better.” Small groups are developed for personal and spiritual growth.

8. The Cross Cultural Model—This model focuses on bringing diverse people together in following Jesus. It follows a set of A-D:

- a. Awareness of Differences
- b. Acceptance of Diversity
- c. Agreement on Direction
- d. Application of Design

9. The Relational Model—Sometimes referred to as the friendship or “warm, fuzzy model,” this model gives priority to relationships. Certain personalities do this naturally, but not always with a purpose. This model desires for its adherents to meet others on purpose.

10. The Leadership Model empowers youth and young adults by developing them as ministry leaders. Inherent in this model is the expectation that young people can lead, and do so now (Evangelism 2011, 41).

The models presented from the Symposium are supposed to be models that have been tried and known to be successful. Unfortunately, the best we can see is that these are

still theories with the anecdotal evidence of the practitioners who presented them. This leadership model holds some interest for me as we are looking for the models that have an outcome of leadership development. This model can prove to be useful in our designing a leadership transfer model for San Bernardino young adults. We will revisit these ten in light of my findings in Chapter 7.

Urban Youth Ministry Models

Revisiting the safe place model of youth ministry as one that is typically found in urban settings, there are some other possible sub-categories outlined in other literature. In *the Heroic Revolution*, Copeland espouses a four-pronged approach to his new agenda for youth ministry.

- ***The primacy of salvation for teens***—the highest goal of every Christian youth group is the conversion of its teenagers to Christianity (Copeland 1995, 4).
- ***The primacy of evangelism from the teens***—One of the most significant things any youth pastor can do is involve youths in evangelism. City youth will often know of contextual ways to preach to their peers that may go far beyond what the youth pastor can understand (Copeland 1995, 5).
- ***The primacy of social action from the teens***—Teenagers must participate in the ongoing world of God. Social action, like evangelism, must be performed by the teens themselves. Young people are never the same after they allow God to work through them (Copeland 1995, 6).
- ***The primacy of empowering teens***—Teenagers from the city feel they have no power over their destiny. Urban youth need opportunities for ownership in their neighborhoods and youth groups which may translate into sending teams of adolescents to community meetings so they can know and respond to the decisions being made over them, or giving more leadership to youth in the local youth group (Copeland 1995, 7).

In *Hip-Hop Church*, Smith and Jackson promote the Youth church model since “the church can’t avoid the cultural context that young people live in. The church cannot avoid the culture that now has global and intergenerational influence. The church cannot avoid the culture of the un-churched postmodern urban community. To avoid hip-hop, given its wide influence on young people, is in some ways avoiding the youth themselves and treating them as modern-day Samaritans” (Smith and Jackson 2005, 42).

Emerging hip-hop ministries churches in Queens, New York (New Life Fellowship), Tampa, Florida (Crossover Church), and Chicago, Illinois (Da House @ Lawndale Community Church) illustrate how to put the Safe place and Youth church models into practice. The challenge with this model and with these worship settings is that, many times, they do not reach others outside the culture or age group (Admissions 2009). Even when there is a facility for leadership training, it will not be well-rounded or intergenerational.

Within this urban youth church model, Smith and Jackson assert that there are things that the Church in general and the African American church in particular must wrestle with. In this post-soul culture, there is a widening gap between African American culture and the church. Further, there is a widening gap between the urban church and its surrounding community (Smith and Jackson 2005, 54).

Complementary to Senter, Fernando Arzola, Jr. outlines four paradigms of youth ministry in the urban context (Arzola 2008, 20):

- I. The traditional youth ministry paradigm—a program-centric model. This is the most common in the urban context. The emphasis in this paradigm is on youth ministry in the urban context. For the traditional youth ministry, the root principle is

discipleship, to become disciples of Christ. At its best, the traditional youth ministry challenges us to be rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. At its worst, it is more concerned with winning souls, indoctrination into a specific tradition and engaging in spiritual warfare at the expense of addressing the social injustices of this world.

II. The liberal youth ministry paradigm—very popular with mainline denominational churches, particularly within middle-class and upper-middle-class neighborhoods. The emphasis of this paradigm is on compassionate ministry for urban youth. The liberal paradigm is based on an ideology of evolution. That is, youth ministries need to change and adapt. Therefore, the liberal paradigm believes that youth ministry as an institution needs to be reformed.

III. The activist youth ministry paradigm—The emphasis is on urban ministry for youth. That is, its primary purpose is developing an urban ministry centered program for youth. At its best, the activist paradigm challenges us to be engaged in addressing systematic injustice and social sin. At its worst, it can be overly concerned with deconstructing traditions, fighting systems and overturning institutions rather than growing in Christ.

IV. The prophetic youth paradigm—the youth ministry paradigm used the least. The emphasis of this ministry is Christian ministry for urban youth. That is, its primary purpose is developing a Christ-centered ministry for urban youth.

After reviewing these models and then thinking through my own experience in youth ministry over the years, I find that with the exception of the Christian education model, I have tried some aspect of each. The Leadership Transfer Model seems to be what many would traditionally see in the Black church as part of the Rites of Passage

programs and the like. Leaders are not always trained as part of a rigid process, but ministry can go up and down, based on whoever the youth leader is. Within the Black Adventist church, having a Youth Pastor is a luxury, not a right. Nor is it expected all the time. In lieu of the Youth Pastor, there is the AY (Adventist Youth) leader. This leader is usually a volunteer voted by the church at-large. Many times, these volunteers don't get the training that they need, and seldom are they assessed for their ability to lead. As a result, we watch youth groups ebb and flow with the personality and time constraints of the leader.

Within Arzola's description of urban youth ministry models, we find that Senter's descriptions can be folded in with overlap in some areas. Where traditional youth ministry is in the urban setting, we have the discipleship and ministry models. For the liberal model in Arzola's description, there is the meta model from Senter's newer paradigms that continues the pattern.. There is no equal from one model to the next, but there are perspectives that parallel one another. Whether the outcome is for discipleship or for youth involvement in the community, we have a model of youth ministry for it. The question remains: what is the model that is best suited for the urban African American youth/young adult to be led into, or prepared for leadership at the local level and, ultimately, in the greater world community?

Summary

Although there is a documented exodus of the young adult populations of many Adventist churches, there are some who stay. The local church should invest time and

energy developing the “ships” in youth and young adult ministry and acknowledging the needs of young adults in their congregations.

Within the context of urban youth ministry, there are a number of models that have been displayed over time. These models have been categorized and labeled, based on the outcomes they produce. Models that are characterized in general youth ministry are the Christian school model, Discipleship, Ministry, and Safe place. All other models of youth and young adult ministry are variations on one or all of these basic models. Each of these models in the past has had a programmed quality that did not see the felt needs of the youth and eventual young adults.

The youth church model was the most utilized in many urban settings with the rise of “hip hop” churches. This youth church model allows for youth and young adults to be active in varying aspects of the ministry to their peers. They do learn leadership in a way, but cannot translate this to working in a multigenerational setting. Without the inter-relational aspects that multigenerational congregations can provide, this model fails to prepare young people to lead in a local church setting.

Models within the traditionally urban setting would be traditional, activist, liberal, or, the least used, prophetic (Arzola 2008, 20). With the exception of the leadership model, there is no model that emphasized leadership as its primary outcome. Building leadership within the young adults of the African American church used to be an obvious by-product of the activist and traditional youth ministry models. It seems that there may be a lack of causes to rally around in many urban areas. If this were so, then the young adults are not being challenged to be leaders in civic or church life. The variations in the

models of youth and young adult ministry do not lend themselves to one complete body of work, nor should they.

For the African American local church, the model of young adult ministry must be such that would take into account young adults needs, allow them to learn from others in the congregation, and give them opportunities to tangibly lead. African American young adults want to be supported while making the transition from youth to young adult. Unfortunately, our current ministry paradigms are not doing that.

PART II
RESEARCH

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will outline the methodologies of my research. I employed focus groups and interviews. I interviewed youth pastors of the SECC and young adults attending African American churches. I also conducted focus groups to hear the voices of young adults in the San Bernardino area.

Overview of Research Study

As a youth and young adult pastor in the African American church, I have had a unique perspective of young people in leadership within the church for the last fifteen years. For the last seven years, I have served as the youth and young adult pastor to an African American church in San Bernardino County, CA. When I arrived at the church, I noticed some people missing. The people who were missing were those who would be called Generation X, the Busters, or the 13th Generation, those born between 1965 and 1985. The remaining youth were getting older and seemingly graduating out of the church. And, among those who attended services regularly, very few were involved in the leadership of the church.

This trend is not uncommon in many of the churches that I have attended over the years. The problem for me is that was not the way I grew up in the church. My own home church in Queens, New York had a steady group of youth and young adults represented

in various leadership positions in the church. My own experience had informed my desire to ask the questions about the state of things: Why do young people stay in the church in the face of many of their friends leaving? How does an emerging young adult culture impact young adults accepting leadership in the local church setting?

Characteristics of the Research Subjects

I researched African American young adults attending predominantly African American Churches under the auspices of the Black Ministries department of the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) of the Seventh-Day Adventists. There are approximately sixteen churches that cover four counties with overlapping cities.

Our process began with scheduling interviews with existing youth pastors that serve in the Black Ministries department of the SECC. Of the four youth pastors that were serving at the time, I was one of them. I interviewed the other two pastors at places of their choice, when they could schedule me. The last of the group accepted a position outside the conference. Once my youth pastor interviews had been completed, my plan was to use that information in the formulation of the guiding questions for my focus groups.

During the time I was scheduling interviews, I also employed the chaplain's office of La Sierra University to sign up students who were within my initial target area: African American, between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, and attending black churches in Riverside County. Unfortunately, many of those who attended the focus

group sessions were transient and did not attend any church regularly, thus making their answers more anecdotal.

While presenting for a youth weekend for a church from San Bernardino, I took the opportunity to speak with the youth on my research topics. The group was a mix of first generation Africans and some African Americans who ranged in ages from fifteen to twenty-one. Some were too young to be included in my focus group study, but I used the opportunity to ask my questions and gauge whether or not I was getting the answers that would help me to find what I was looking for.

Over the last twenty-four months, I have interviewed twenty-five young adults, convened three focus groups and one informal group to get a handle on the questions I was asking. As a result of the discussion from the focus groups, a new set of questions emerged for the young adult interviews. The young adults interviewed did not have to be in leadership within their local church. These young adults, however, had to be African American young adults ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-nine. I expanded my range based on the definition of emerging adults (Arnett 2004, 19). I listened to their life experiences and what attracts or repels them from actively seeking leadership roles in the local church. I also interviewed African American youth pastors in these churches to identify what may or may not be their questions regarding what I see as a trend. Additionally, I interviewed the Associate Director for Youth Ministries at the SECC for any additional information that can be gleaned from his experience in the field and as a native of Southeastern California. The youth pastor's' answers, while informative, ultimately did not prove useful as far as my Central Research Issue was concerned.

Although interviewing the youth pastors was informative as it relates to youth pastor development, I did not get the information that I thought was relevant regarding the attitudes of African American young adults. What I did gain was further anecdotal data to support my questions.

Methodology and Procedures

I employed focus groups with the young adults in order to draw on their collective understanding of their expectations for church leadership and what stories they have as to why they are or why they aren't interested in leading anything at the local church level. These young people live within the urban culture and live within different socio-economic strata. I was looking for a range of ideas or feelings toward leadership in the church. The informal atmosphere of the focus group helped me to uncover their opinions and factors that impact their behaviors and motivation for accepting or not accepting leadership at the local church level. It was also helpful that because of my activity at regional youth events, many of these young adults were familiar with me and, as a result, I did not need to "break down barriers."

Because the world has definitely changed since I was a young adult, it was important for me to hear the struggles of the 21st century African American urban young adults as it relates to their inclusion in the local church. The interview methodology gave me access to individuals without violating their privacy or testing their patience. It also allowed me to capture the data needed for penetrating qualitative analysis without participant observation, unobtrusive observation, or prolonged contact. In other words, it

allowed me to achieve crucial qualitative objectives within a manageable methodological context (McCracken 1988, 11).

My own experience as an interviewer in my former employment also informed and prepared me for the interview process, both formal and informal. The interviews that I conducted with the youth pastors were informal in nature only because I have relationships with all of my interviewees as colleagues in ministry. The questions, however, did follow a more semi-structured flow because they will be one-on-one with a definite purpose in mind. My interviews with the young adults also took on a semi-structured flow with just a few questions that allowed me to frame similar issues in different ways.

Since my research encompasses attitudes of African American young adults, the range of ideas that these young people presented in the focus group setting would be key. My purpose was to listen and gather information. It was my way to better understand how the young adults feel or think about an issue, product or service (Krueger and Casey 2000). In this case, it was the attitudes of these particular young adults, in this particular denomination, in this particular part of the United States. These focus groups were important because they not only exposed a range of ideas, but assisted me in trying to understand differences in regions (if there are any), and helped me to uncover factors that influence opinions, behavior or motivation (Krueger and Casey 2000, 19). Since I ultimately settled on one region (San Bernardino), additional factors for the other regions (San Diego and Riverside) would have to be included in post-doctorate study. However, it did allow me to see differences between churches that were similar because of

predominant ethnicity, but were very different because of the pastoral leadership and generational make up of each congregation.

After the focus group analysis was completed, with consultation with my professors, it was determined that additional research was necessary to further support the information from my focus group study. I then went on to randomly interview, over a six-month period, an additional twenty-five young adults who attended the black churches in San Bernardino.

Cultural Appropriateness

In the Southeastern California Conference, there is an emphasis placed on youth ministry from leadership at the Executive level, but that emphasis has not always been played out in the life of the local church. As a church hired youth coordinator, I did speak with my colleagues in youth ministry at the local and conference level. Since starting at my church, I have had the opportunity to create a rapport with past and present leadership. Through informal discussion with colleagues in this field and by speaking with African American youth leaders in other areas, I have been encouraged to pursue this research.

As far as the language and culture of the African American young adult is concerned, my own interaction with the youth and young adults in my local church has aided in keeping me “in the loop” of current social trends and colloquial terms. I don’t anticipate any confusion as it relates to verbal communication in our focus groups or the interviews with youth pastors.

I conducted all interviews in person. Some were phone interviews when schedules and distance were an issue, and all the in-person interviews were recorded. The recordings were backed up on computer and, subsequently, cloud storage. My experience with interviews and focus groups in the past aided me in administering the questions in our informal interviews. My past experiences as a workshop presenter and speaker contributed to the way our focus groups were conducted. I conducted one informal group in order to try out my questions in a large group setting. They showed me that my focus groups would be more manageable with a group of five to eight. All of the pastoral interviewees, at that time, were currently working in ministry at the local or conference level, with consistent interaction with African American young adults within my research age range (eighteen to twenty-nine years old).

Subject Recruitment and Informed Consent

Subjects for this research were selected randomly, based on their age and church affiliation. Regular church attendance was not a requirement, just that they attend one of the churches in the San Bernardino County area. The subject's involvement in local church ministry was not required and should not be used as a reason to get them into a focus group. Although in this cultural setting the approval of regional church leadership (SECC) was enough to proceed with research and interviews, another layer of security was informed consent. Each subject was given a written consent form to read and sign that describes the research process and objectives. In the absence of a written consent, the subjects were read the consent letter and asked for their consent to be recorded. A sample

of this consent form is found in Appendix B. I personally collected these forms from each subject and keep them on file in a database that will only be accessed by me.

For the young adult interviews, an explanation of the research and their involvement was done prior to their agreement to be interviewed and recorded. I received their verbal consent before recording our interviews. For those interviews that were completed over the phone, subjects were asked if they could wait while I typed in their answers to the questions being asked.

Potential Risks and Anticipated Benefits of this Research

Any potential risk in this research is minimal, in my opinion. The subjects did not need parental consent because they are between the ages of eighteen to twenty-nine. The questions for the focus group dealt mainly with attitudes toward leadership at the local church level and, therefore, would not create any compromise in church doctrine. No personal information, outside of generic demographic data (church region, age, gender, just to name a few), was asked for or exchanged. Names are left out or changed in any written documentation to increase anonymity and privacy. The only possible risk may have been perceived favoritism of those selected for interviews. This risk is minimal at best since the groups were mixed from different churches in the selected regions.

All the raw data was available only to myself, the researcher, and was saved and backed up digitally on an external hard drive as well as password protected. All of my handwritten notes and documentation were transcribed digitally and hard copies destroyed after the completion of this document. After names and places were coded,

findings and data were available to be shared with any outside party for consultative or review purposes. Any person wishing to withdraw from the research at any time would be permitted to do so and their collected data will be removed from the database.

I anticipated discovering or confirming a pattern for transitioning youth and young adults into leadership at the local church level. This method was selected so that I obtain reliable evidence dealing with the attitudes of the young adults who have stayed at their churches and, hopefully, those who attend but are not interested in leadership in any way.

Reliability and Validity

Having completed focus groups in one region presented a reliability issue because I would not have the other counties to which to compare them. Once we settled on keeping the focus of our study on the African American churches in San Bernardino County, the reliability of the focus groups found in each church was compared and each focus group was looked at together. By using a representative sampling of young adults in my focus groups and interviews, I am looking to gain information that may be universally applicable (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, 1501).

Because I came into this research with a certain bias (my upbringing) toward young adults and their responsibility toward the local church, I admit that my interpretation of the information in the following chapters may be subjected to how I see the world. At the same time, because I hold many of the same characteristics as those in my study, I will also ask: Are the differences I see or report there because I am a part of

a different generation? In this way, I believe we will keep our study justifiable (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, 1524), even if it is not always objective.

Summary

African American young adults agreed to be interviewed and, on three occasions, participated in focus groups for the purpose of creating a reliable sample of young adults to which I could glean their attitudes toward leadership in the local church. Upon not getting to the root of the issue with just three focus groups, further validity would be found by interviewing another twenty-five young adults with varied backgrounds from different churches. This information created for me a narrative of not only their attitudes toward leadership in the local church, but also how they feel about leadership in general. Additional supportive information was gleaned from interviews with youth pastors and focus groups that never met the minimum amount of participants.

CHAPTER 4

THE FOCUS GROUPS

When I began asking young adults about their attitudes toward leadership, I wanted to know how they felt about existing leadership and whether or not they saw themselves as leaders. In this chapter, I will discuss my findings from those focus groups of African American young adults attending predominantly black churches in San Bernardino, California.

Focus Group Study

I conducted three focus groups in the San Bernardino County area. There are six African American churches represented in this area. I saw representation from four of them reflected in the focus groups and the informal meeting. The groups will be referred to as FGSB1, FGFSB2, and FGSB3. A chart representing the groups is found in Appendix F.

All of the groups met at different churches in the San Bernardino area after different events. SB1 met after a young adult event at one of the local churches. SB1 has the distinction of having the most churches represented in their group (three). This group was comprised of six males and one female, all within the target age range of eighteen to twenty-four. FGSB2 was the only group with females in the majority. There were three females and two males for a total of five young adults. We planned for eight, but two

(female) were sick and one (male) had to work. This group met over lunch at another local church. FGSB3 had a large group of males and one female in attendance. We met after a worship service and there was a great deal of movement with the group. Once we were settled, we had seven males and one female who answered the protocol questions and gave insight to the subjects we were covering. I was still within my window for the focus group amount since each group was conducted with five to ten people led by a skilled interviewer (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, 1542).

The young adults in the groups come from varying backgrounds. Some were first generation American, while some were naturalized citizens. All of the participants were unmarried, African American, attending Seventh-day Adventist churches, and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four.

Originally, my focus group plan consisted of having one focus group for each county in the SECC. I employed surrogates familiar with each area to select the young adults who would participate in the research. After a few false starts, we made a change to the plan. I was able to conduct an informal group with some young people from another San Bernardino area church that is predominantly African American. The answers received from the informal group helped to guide my discussions in the San Bernardino focus groups. I was also able to meet with undergraduate students on the campus of La Sierra University.

The focus groups were proposed to be in San Bernardino, Riverside, and either Orange or San Diego Counties, to give a wide enough sampling of the SECC African American young adults that met the criteria outlined in my HSR application. I was able to conduct one focus group in San Bernardino and two on the campus of La Sierra

University. The two on the La Sierra University campus did not meet the criteria outlined in that I only had two respondents for the first group and three for the second. Also, the group of students was transitory. Although they met the physical characteristics of the focus group, they had not been attending African American churches primarily, leaving the information I gained from them as support to any trends I found in the other groups. What these students did tell me, however, were engaging stories of their home churches that were familiar to the stories I would later hear in young adult interviews. It was good anecdotally and led me to believe that we were on the right track with this research. I am still in contact with the San Diego and Riverside county representatives. I am including continued research for those counties to be areas for future study.

Preliminary Themes

I wanted to see if there was any correlation that could be drawn from home life to attitudes toward leadership, so I asked all the respondents about their parents' marital status. No clear link could be established without doing additional questioning and study, which can be done on a larger scale at another time, and will be discussed as a possibility in the section entitled "next steps."

Initially, it seems that the young adults who participated in the focus groups all felt the same way about the lack of their peers in local church leadership. After some probing and additional questions, they, indeed, echoed the same sentiment, best summed up in the statement: "I wish my church would put more young people into leadership roles instead of all the old people. So (we) may (sic) show that the young people actually

have potential. And we're not just the behind the camera; that we are people who can actually do stuff" (FGLS1b).

Regardless of region or church makeup, there is a gap that is evident and a tension in some places that is palpable. The young adults who still attend are fighting against an established system that they don't always know how to navigate. Many choose to stop trying as a result.

For those who remain in their churches, they feel pressure to perform, do not feel ready to lead and, in some instances, don't feel like they should. As one young lady put it, "If it wasn't for my love for God and my own desire to develop, I wouldn't do anything at [the] church." Others have felt like not doing anything because of harsh words of criticism.

Starting Early

In contrast to the youth pastors interviewed, the focus group participants almost all believed that leadership should start early, with one respondent saying, "when you start talking." Have we (leaders) missed the willingness that young adults have to be leaders? In thinking about when to begin in leadership, young adults think leadership can start early, but the onus is on the person who is to be in leadership and not necessarily on those who should be introducing them to leadership. With responses like, "whenever you're ready" or "when you're called to it," young adults still see that the choice is in the hands of the one being called. Table 3 has the breakdown of the responses for "The perfect age to begin in leadership:"

TABLE 3
THE PERFECT AGE
(Brooks 2011)

	FGSB1	FGSB2	FGSB3
The perfect age to begin in Leadership	a. any age, from 8 up b. whenever you're called; c. whenever you're put in a position to do what needs to be done; d. 12 and up; e. when you feel like it's time for something to change; f. no perfect age; g. 14	a. whenever you're ready, b. whenever you're called to it c. when God calls you	a. Eight b. Thirteen c. Any age d. Whenever you feel the calling

There was also an interesting correlation between whether the young adults were active in the churches they attended now. But, almost to a person, if someone at his or her church affirmed the young person, they were involved on some level. They did not all lead in ministries, but all accepted responsibility for being a part of something at the local church level. The students who were not at their home churches were less likely to get involved without someone from the church asking them first.

The highest frustration was noted within the FGSB1 group mainly because many in that group were active in their local churches and they had a lot to say when it came to what they expected from their peers as it related to involvement in the local church. FGSB2 and FGSB3 experienced recent transitions in the pastoral leadership. Transitions in pastoral leadership can leave many to feel more alienated from the local church, if they are not involved at some level. As a result, there can be discussion about how pastoral

transitions affect the groups in the church, especially the youth and young adults of a church. This is an area that others can look into for further study. For the purposes of this paper, however, we will only posit the question and leave it for others to answer.

Regardless of how the young people felt about their current leadership at the church, they all wanted to see more young people involved in leadership on all levels at the church. When asked, “What would they do to change their local church,” Table 4 outlines the responses.

TABLE 4
WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO CHANGE
LOCAL LEADERSHIP?
(Brooks 2011)

	FGSB1	FGSB2	FGSB3
What would you do to change your local church?	a. So I feel like if there were room to improve in any certain area it would be you know to loosen up. b. take risks c. be open to change	a. More young adults “stepping up” to lead b. More shadowing of leadership	a. Get in the “same page” b. Get a mentorship program

Discussion was varied between the groups as it related to who they saw as the best leaders they know. The majority leaned toward their pastors, church members, and people who impacted them personally on their own life journey. None of the San Bernardino groups thought of family members as among the best leaders they know.

From these young adults, I felt a frustration with things as they are and a desire to see things change, but only if the adults are willing to take some risks and come out of their comfort zones.

Leadership Characteristics

When the FGSB2 group was asked about how leadership could be more effective in bringing in young adults in, the following suggestions were given: (1) Change up the sermons so that they can be relatable to a wider audience (multi-generational), and, (2) Give the church a real say in who the pastoral leadership would be for their future. The first suggestion is something that can be done easily from the desk, while the second was structural problem from the Conference that we are under and not a part of this study, therefore I couldn't address it.

The FGSB3 group struggled with who they thought were good leaders. They did not believe they knew any leaders that were especially good. They could articulate the things and characteristics that they thought were important, but could only name four people who they thought were especially good leaders, two of the four people being Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Barak Obama. This group is also dealing with a leadership shift that may have impacted their ideas about the leaders in their midst.

In Table 5, two of the leadership questions are combined to show a contrast between what the young people thought was necessary to lead their local churches and what they thought a good leader was, in general.

TABLE 5
WHAT YOUNG ADULTS THINK LEADERS NEED
TO BE/HAVE
 (Brooks 2011)

	FGSB1	FGSB2	FGSB3
What characteristics are necessary to lead at your home church	a. [spiritually] strong, willing to listen; b. consistency, humility; c. patience; d. energetic; e. Swag	a. a good communicator b. prepared c. enthusiasm d. focused e. Helpful	a. Enthusiasm b. Open-minded c. Someone who is not a dictator d. Be present e. Realistic f. Someone willing to train others
A good leader	a. is one that follows through, b. listens to people beneath them; c. works well with others; d. Connects the limbs that make the body; e. Already knows the destination, is focused; f. is consistent; g. has patience;	a. cares for the people they're leading, b. listens, c. shows they want to lead, d. will lead	a. He leads without emotion b. leads to a good character c. is involved d. turns their tongue 7 times before they talk e. hardens his heart f. relates g. puts others before themselves.

Being energetic and enthusiastic seemed to be the characteristics that resonated the most with the young adult groups. In general, these young adults want to see leaders who are non-judgmental, relatable, who have focus and take care of their responsibilities, among other attributes. In their own desire to find a place for themselves in the world and in their church, these young adults look for leaders who care about them. As self serving as it may sounds, at this most critical juncture of their emotional and spiritual maturation, it is very important for young adults to be led by leaders they know who care and can “bring out of them what wouldn’t normally be seen.”

While shifts in pastoral leadership become par for the course, in the life of the adult church member, many young adults grow attached and are seldom prepared for the possible loss of their pastor or youth pastor to another part of the ministry. As a result, they feel betrayed in some situations because they feel like the pastor is leaving them.

Theoretical Narrative

In our focus group transcripts, some themes were repeating. The first was the apparent lack of young adults in the churches represented. Not just a lack in leadership, but a lack in attendance. Even the group that had the largest representation of young adults attending their church still expressed a desire to see more young adults in leadership as well as present on Sabbath mornings. Another repeating theme was a lack of consistent leadership from the pastoral standpoint. Traditionally, it used to be that senior pastors in the African American churches have an average tenure of three to four years. Here in Southern California, it's closer to five years. Recent changes in pastoral leadership have left a few churches without pastors while the Conference seeks to fill the open positions. The last of the most repeated themes was a challenge with church members and leadership in some places that is not willing to change, or change fast enough for the young adults in their midst. These repeating themes create a theoretical narrative for this research. This theoretical narrative says: The attitudes of African American young adults toward leadership are impacted by the lack of the peer group in the churches, inconsistent leaders, and frustration with a system that is unwilling to change.

Focus Group Findings

My findings from the San Bernardino focus groups conducted were not far away from some of the things I identified in my local church, but speak to something that resonates across the board in the African American churches studied. There is definitely a lack of young adult involvement in local church leadership. The reasons for this lack of involvement are harder to put a pinpoint.

Reasons for Lack of Involvement

Young adults need to know that they are valued as people. It is important that the local church members and especially pastors spend time with this group to learn their gifts and their ideas about ministry in their context. With that said, there are a number of reasons that young adults in San Bernardino were not active in leadership. The following are a number of repeating themes that were produced from the focus groups.

Pressure

In the case of young adult who are active and involved, even though they are not in leadership, they feel the pressure of expectations associated with leadership that they cannot live up to or don't think they can live up to. One young adult called it a 'spirit of competition' where he thought it was "tough to lead in this environment." They feel pressure to perform. This pressure of expectation is doubly egregious when dealing with a population that is already uncomfortable with their "new adulthood" and are now being pushed toward responsibility without being adequately trained (in their opinion). When young adults are unsure, there are feelings like those expressed by a young lady who is

active at her church, “It’s nerve racking to lead (do things).” As a result, she is not always willing.

Fear

Young adults in transition have a fear of failure and, as a result, eschew leadership opportunities. Even if they were involved as teens, there is no guarantee that they will continue in any ministry of the church without help. Many fear what the church will think about them. I asked all the young adults in the focus groups if they were affirmed at their home churches. They all responded and gave examples of affirmation; they all were not confident or comfortable with accepting leadership roles. Among those who did participate in the worship services on some level, the fear was not only of failure, but a fear of becoming like a parent who may give “too much” to the church. They have not seen healthy relationships or leaders in the church and fear they may be repeating a cycle modeled before them. As a result, they don’t bother.

Lack of Mentorship

A few of the young adults mentioned the need for mentorship at the local church level. One young lady said,

I think the shadowing aspect, you know how they do in regular jobs, they (church members) don’t really show you how to do it. They’re like, “hey can you do this for me,” like there! Do it how you think it should be done, Nah, let me take you through the process, or this is what you could say or if you need help let me know, contact me. There really isn’t that helping aspect” (FGSB2b).

This lack of mentorship also contributes to the chasm between the generations. The young adults think it's the job of the elderly and the baby boomers to train the young adults, but they have not received it. One young man said, "There is a whole lot of talking, but not a lot of helping." There were, however, two positive mentoring relationships that were explained in the groups. One was of a young adult who taught the young men of the church how to run the audio-visual equipment. Once the young men were proficient, he charged them to teach other young people as they got older. Another was the mentoring of a young man at one of the local churches. The senior pastor saw the gifts this young man displayed and assigned him a mentor. This young man now serves as a pastoral intern in the church where he grew up. Unfortunately, these stories are the exception, not the rule.

In areas where mentoring is lacking from the top down, perhaps it is time to look into reverse mentoring (Krueger and Casey 2000, 2). This would not only address the mentoring gap by changing the mindset of the older leaders, but that also of the young leaders by following a system of teaching up.

Lack of Peer Group

When I was growing up, I would hear the phrase "a crowd creates a crowd" as it related to entertaining. Whether it is at a party or for a concert, "like attracts like." These same themes are applicable in today's church climate. African American young adults want to go to places where they see people who are or are around their age. One responder said, "not having young adults at church causes less young people to come to church." Another in the FGSB1 group vehemently declared that he knew at least fifteen

people on his campus who were former Adventists, but who had left to go to other denominations because they had larger numbers within their peer group.

Teaching young adults how to win their friends to Christ in non-threatening ways could go a long way in addressing this issue. Frequent ideas among the respondents were statements like, “youth to youth” and “the younger the leader, the more willing (young people are) to listen.” One respondent went so far as to suggest “inception,” the concept of placing an idea in the mind of a young adult for them to reach out to their sphere of influence.

There was frustration noted earlier from one of the focus groups and shared by the others when it comes to their feelings about the lack of young adults in their churches. One respondent believed that their peers needed to step up and accept leadership while, at the same time, admitting that he was not sure if God was calling him to leadership and that he would be involved, but only on his terms. This question of God’s call can keep many young adults out of leadership because they cannot always identify what God’s call is for them. This can prove challenging when, as young adults, they have “the look” that meets the approval of an older generation but they still feel that they are the same as those who may be looked on as outcasts or on the fringe because of their appearance.

Lack of Connection

Many of the young adults in my focus groups have spent at least half of their lives at the church they currently attend. The members of their congregations have affirmed them all at one time or another; yet, they do not feel connected to them. They see their churches as places where they are not welcomed. They feel like they cannot be

themselves at their churches. They believe, in some instances, that they are no different than the visitors with piercings and tattoos. They believe that the adults in their congregation pay attention to a look, and if you have that ‘look,’ you are accepted (within the church), but if you do not, you are marginalized.

In this climate, they feel like they do not want another lecture. “I don’t always want to be taught. I just want to talk to someone.” When the connection they desire is not met, it is easier for them to walk out the door. As far as many are concerned, they were “wearing a mask and no one at the church was able to recognize it, so I will leave and seek out people who are interested in the real me.” Another young adult referred to a lack of connection to the older generation as they’re “in cars, and we’re walking. We see what they don’t see. At this point, I guess we should have some older members providing cab service!”

This need for connection in the church is not a small matter at all for the young adults who attend. Some of these young adults long for the days of youth groups and teen programs, reflecting, “we don’t do stuff like we used to” or they miss the activities in youth ministry. “I missed all the, like all the time that, all the fun time that we used to have back in the day” is the refrain of another young man from FGSB1.

Leadership Challenges

Another issue causing young adults to not join in leadership is the shifting nature of leadership. Of the four churches represented in my focus groups, one was without a pastor (although an interim is scheduled to start next month); one just lost a pastor (he resigned from ministry); and one has a pastor who will be districted (taking on the

responsibilities of more than one church). Regardless of the real reasons why some pastors leave, the young people see it as pastors leaving them, causing this response by a young adult female, “I think what makes people leave is that people keep leaving us. It’s discouraging. You don’t care.” When the young adults feel like you (pastors/leadership) don’t care about the church, they wonder why they should.

Along with shifting or changing leadership, there are concerns with pastoral leadership that is not led by the Holy Spirit. One of the focus group participants in FGSB3 made it clear that “(Pastoral) Leadership needs guidance by the Holy Spirit.” There was a concern that their former leadership had a CEO mentality and they were not sure that the pastor should be the CEO of the church, but should be looking to God as the CEO. “The church tries to preserve culture, but neglects Bible culture,” laments one young adult participant.

In another group, the young adults liked their leadership but felt “they do what they want rather than what the church needs.” Many of the young people liked their (pastoral) leadership, but showed concerns for specific issues, like “decisions made are personal, cultural, but not spiritual.” And, in one instance, a young adult was satisfied with the pastoral leadership at his church, but expressed displeasure with members in power [who] may be going too far.

They take their leadership roles and start acting [more] holier than thou in that certain role that they have so it would go from just asking them to watch the door and have certain people coming in and out. And the next thing you know you’re trying to get through the door and then they want your ID and birth certificate and everything else before you can even go into the church or out of the church or anything like that, so it’s...other than that it’s just how other people take their roles. It’s like one minute they’re doing it for God and everything like that and the next minute it’s um, it’s just they want to command authority and stuff” (FGSB1a).

Some of the other young adults who were in leadership positions or were active in the activities of the church expressed feelings of being on their own as a result of sporadic leadership. So, they respond, “Let’s see what we can do on our own.” Or, they are asked to fill in in some capacity in a program or worship service. One young man said, “Sometimes I felt like I could do it, others it seemed like I just happened to be there.” There was no thought to him participating; he was just the guy who was on hand. This will happen in places where the leadership (pastors or department heads) were not good at planning ahead. For example, while I was with one of the focus groups, the youth leader of that church was planning the worship service for the next week and just filling in the names of the young people in the room with me. And, when this happens, depending on the relationship with the person asking, as one young lady resigned, “You have to do it.”

Resistance to Change

In an age of changing cell phones, Internet providers, TV shows, and pop stars, young adults are acculturated to the fluid nature of the world around them. They are challenged when they come to a church that does not embrace change easily. Granted, change in church is a process that cannot be taken lightly, but when young adults reach out and don’t get support because of “old fashioned” attitudes, their attendance is affected. They respond with their feet.

Young adults also report that adults are not always receptive when we (the young adults) change. If they see you are good at something, they want you to do that thing all the time. “It’s just “praise dance you’re so gifted. You should do this.” So, when I told

people I want to go into science, they say “What? Like, really.” The young adults believe that the older generation wants things to stay the same instead of changing because, in their words, “They’re naturally resistant to change.”

Church Not Welcoming

Young people will not communicate with and seek help from parents, pastors, and teachers whose lifestyles and passions do not match their words and faith (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007, 64). This quote is exemplified in the following response in a focus group:

M - it seem like whenever someone comes to church, they don’t really welcome them, they look at... they might say that, we love everyone and what not, but they still seem to have... (indistinct, too many voices) if we bring someone in from the church. I saw a man sitting out there by himself. I came in and said happy Sabbath to him, he said, “good morning.” then he went in church to look for a seat. he was looking around and I saw one of the older people that he looked at and make eye contact. he went like this (turning his head away)

D - you’re kidding!

M - He went like this (repeating the previous action) The guy kept looking around for somewhere to sit and ended up sitting like in the seat right there (motions to his left) and no one around him was saying anything to him or anything.

These young people see their church as not very welcoming and, as a result, shun leadership. They believe that the adults at their church are acting hypocritically by not being more welcoming.

Current Leadership Transfer

The Nominating committee (Church 2000, 106) is normally the route that many Seventh Day Churches use to vote in new officers (leaders), annually or bi-annually. Young adults seem to balk at being volunteered by the adults in the church. When asked

about whether their church had a formal or informal way to get young adults into leadership positions, a young adult responded,

They're kinda slick with it. They'll first ask you to do small things like join the choir or oh just handing out these papers or uh go read a children's story or something like that. And then after they see you becoming comfortable then when the nominating committee meets they'll nominate you" (FGSB1a).

This wouldn't be a problem except, more often than not, as a student from La Sierra University (FGLS1a) said, "For my church, they just sign you up for it."

Church members on nominating committees vote to add people to the leadership team of the church. Young adults are normally asked to either lead in youth group (Adventist Youth Society) or to help in teaching Sabbath school classes. They are not normally looked at to aid in other areas of the church. The churches that claimed an informal and formal way of getting young adults into leadership are usually placing young adults in ministries that they expect that young person to be able to handle in the future. The challenge is that, in these situations, the young adult is not always consulted before they are nominated. Then, they are pressured by well-meaning members to stay with it, all the while not being taught how to do what they have been nominated for.

Youth Pastor Interviews

The interviews with youth pastors took place between June and August 2010. I have a personal relationship with each of the interviewees, which made the interviews go smoothly. The hardest part was the data collection from this group. As a result, one interview was completed via phone while the other two were conducted in person.

The original plan was to meet with three youth pastors and the Associate youth Director, who is a former youth pastor and is now in charge of event planning and leadership training for the auxiliary youth leaders in the SECC. One of the youth pastors accepted a position in another conference, so that reduced the number of people interviewed to three.

The information garnered from the interviews with youth pastors and the Associate Director helped me to develop the protocol questions for the focus groups and form the questions I used for the young adult interviews that are my primary data.

Preliminary Themes

Although youth pastors traditionally have a passion for youth and young adults, this passion is not always accompanied with a way to develop leaders. At the time of my interviews, all the youth pastors were male. There is no way to determine a correlation between gender and attendance in youth ministry. Possible correlation between gender of the youth pastor and youth group attendance may be something that someone else can tackle in the future. That could make a difference, especially when we are seeing less male youth (or young adults) in our churches. Of the three pastors interviewed, two of them cite other pastors as their main influences in Christianity and leadership, while family members mainly influenced their personal walk with Christ. Even in this small sample, we can see the influence of examples to the life of leaders. Table 6 shows the influencers of the Christian life and the leadership journey of these youth pastors.

TABLE 6
WHO ARE THE PEOPLE INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR
DEVELOPMENT AS A CHRISTIAN/LEADER?
(Brooks 2010)

	YP1	YP2	YP3
Development as a Christian	a. Parents b. Peer group member	a. Parents b. Spouse c. Sibling d. Television evangelist	a. Local Pastor b. Pastoral acquaintance c. Pastoral Leader d. Step-father e. Family friend
Development as a Leader	a. Pastoral Leader b. Father c. Youth Pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church d. Seminary peer	a. Administrators at first career b. Local pastor c. School d. Brother	Additional Pastoral acquaintance

There was a question that surfaced with two of three mentioning family and peer members as influential in their Christian journey: For the young people who come from dysfunctional and broken homes, does your home life determine your development as a Christian? Yet, when looking at their development as leaders, all of the interviewees mentioned at least one pastoral influence. It seems, just from this simple interaction, that parents and peers can have a dramatic impact on how and if young people will follow Christ, while the pastor's influence can determine if that young person will accept leadership.

All of the youth pastors interviewed believed that the church should have a leadership development program. One of them is working on developing one that could be used at their local church. Two out of three believed that any strategy should include some aspect of mentoring that would connect the young people in the church with older

members. One-third believed that the strategy should begin and end with the Bible, focusing primarily on spiritual gifts. Table 7 includes their ideas for this strategy:

TABLE 7
STRATEGIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
(Brooks 2010)

	YP1	YP2	YP3
What do you think a local church leadership strategy should look like?	It should be connected to an adult mentor. It should require monthly or bi-monthly meeting. And it should involve shadowing, with the young person having to complete tasks that are reasonable and attainable	Start with spiritual gifts. Then find someone who is a good mentor for that person and then begin to groom them. Allow for them to get chances to display their gifts.	Strategy should be intentional in terms of seeking out young people who show potential. Should be unintentional to encourage people who have gifts to maybe challenge themselves and go to another level. Includes missional development, faith education, mentorship, and reading literature to expand their faith.

When completing the statement, “If I had my way...,” all of the youth pastors stated more young adult involvement. One went on to elaborate that this young adult involvement would need to be such that it would have an influence at the upper levels of the denomination’s administration. It is interesting that all of the youth pastors have thought about the idea of a leadership strategy but, for one reason or another, this strategy has not been a part of their youth ministry experience. What are the prevailing factors that would keep them from being able to implement such a strategy?

All of the youth pastors said that there was, at the very least, an informal leadership development strategy at their local churches, although none could tell me what that strategy is. One said, “I want to say yes, but I don’t know. It was probably more informal than formal.” Even among youth pastors, it seems to be hard to distinguish when a youth or young adult is ready to assume a leadership role in the local church. In Table 8, “The perfect age to begin in leadership is” has vague responses from the very same group of people responsible for developing the leaders in their midst. This vagueness may be another contributing factor to the apathy assumed by African American young adults in the local churches.

Without a clear mandate to youth pastors to develop young adult leaders, we can get caught in the circle of moving from one crisis to the next. There must be a way to create clarity for youth pastors and youth leaders when it comes to developing young adult leaders in the local church.

TABLE 8
YOUTH PASTORS THINK
(Brooks 2010)

Finish the sentence	YP1	YP2	YP3
A good leader...	always listens	exemplifies love, patience, and a God fearing attitude	lives out the grace of Jesus Christ by loving in a way that only Jesus could.
The perfect age to begin in leadership is...	anytime	When that individual feels the call	when someone has the grasp of what it means to be a true Christian
I wish more young adults...	had the opportunity to lead	would fight instead of just giving up	realized the value of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives
If I had my way...	I would really want to see more youth involved in the church; I would train every youth leader to love their youth. Make most churches family-oriented	I would have more young adults involved in this denomination at the upper levels of the denomination	I would create an atmosphere in my community of faith where people could express their uniqueness and personalities and feel accepted for exactly who God has called them to be--different than the blueprint of somebody else.

Theoretical Narrative

The youth pastor interviews confirmed a hunch that I had when I began this research. The attitudes of young adults toward leadership are more or less impacted by the awareness of their youth pastors to involve them at an early stage. From the interviews of youth pastors, the challenge is that, in attempting to meet the spiritual needs of the young people they serve, they don't always know when to begin leadership training. This results in youth and young adults becoming leaders not because they intended it to be so, but because they are in the position by circumstance. Because many

churches (and youth pastors) lack a procedural way to matriculate youth into young adult leaders, they end up with more situational leaders than intentional. This sort of leadership development is not advantageous or sustainable.

My take away from the interviews is that youth pastors want to be able to involve their young people in leadership. As a result, we have youth pastors wanting to see more young adults involved, but have no procedural way to do it.

Summary

There are a number of reasons why African American young adults are not in leadership in the local churches in San Bernardino County. These reasons include fear, pressure, lack of peer group and mentoring, church not welcoming, and resistance to change. The pressure to lead hinders young adults from seeking leadership when members and older leaders have not taken the time to train them. Young adults do not feel like they are being developed to lead but, instead, are forced to step in and deal with what comes because that is what has always been done. Tradition will not create new leaders and, more often than not, tradition is what sends many away.

The presence of a youth pastor in a church does not guarantee a path to leadership for young people transitioning to emerging adulthood. Youth pastors who were interviewed stated that they valued the presence of mentors but do not have a way to translate that to their ministry context. While transitioning young adults into leadership is something that youth pastors desire, they do not know how to get there.

After talking with young adults in groups and interviewing youth pastors, I wanted to get a more detailed understanding of what young adults wanted from their

church, what they enjoyed about leadership, and what they felt was missing in their development. What follows are my interviews with emerging adults attending African American churches in San Bernardino.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVIEWS

Over a period of eight months, I was able to interview twenty-five African American young adults ranging in age from nineteen to twenty-nine. All of these young adults were in regular attendance at various black churches located on the west side of San Bernardino County. The majority of my interviews were in person, while four had to be conducted over the phone. Although the phone interviews could not be recorded, I was able to ask the interviewees to give me enough time to type their answers and I read the answers back to them to be sure we had an understanding as to what they meant. The twenty-five young adults interviewed—nine males and sixteen females—represented views from six churches.

After determining a number of reasons from the focus groups as to why young adults were not in leadership, I conducted additional interviews with African American young adults to determine how they felt about leadership. Was leadership at the church level something they cared about or even strived for? What I discovered was a good deal more nuanced than I previously thought. I also asked them if there was anything that the church could have done to assist them in their leadership journey.

Attitudes

When asked, with no qualifier, how they felt about leadership at their local church, eighteen percent of the respondents answered with a positive answer, with another almost twenty-two percent willing to be involved in leadership. This leaves us with sixty percent of responses that were neutral or negative. Of the sixty percent, not all of the respondents gave a clear answer as to how they felt toward leadership, at their church or in general. After some clarification, the clear answer was positive, with some nuances. There were the young ladies who were excited about leadership because they were the youngest leaders at their church and they also believed they had something to prove. There was the young man who thought positively about his church, but could not be convinced to join leadership because he wasn't sure if that was something he wanted. The most curious attitude toward leadership in the local church was "shy away from the front." Those who claimed to "shy away from the front" were most likely to be willing to work in a team and wanted to be involved. They just did not want to be the person who had to make the report, if the report had to be made in front of an audience. They also did not want to have to be the one to cast vision or direct anyone else to do anything. What they wanted was to work collaboratively on those things that they were passionate about. Those who expressed a feeling of pressure toward leadership also were unsure of self, although they were practicing leadership in one form or another. And, although there were no outright negative views expressed toward leadership in the church, close to ten percent not only stated, "I don't want to be told I'm doing something wrong or looked at, or judged," but felt unsure of self and not valued as adults.

According to the data, the attitudes of African American young adults toward leadership are positive. Young adults are willing to be in leadership as long as they do not have to be alone in leading. As with many young adults who work or may be students, their involvement in leadership will be limited because they don't want too much on their plate.

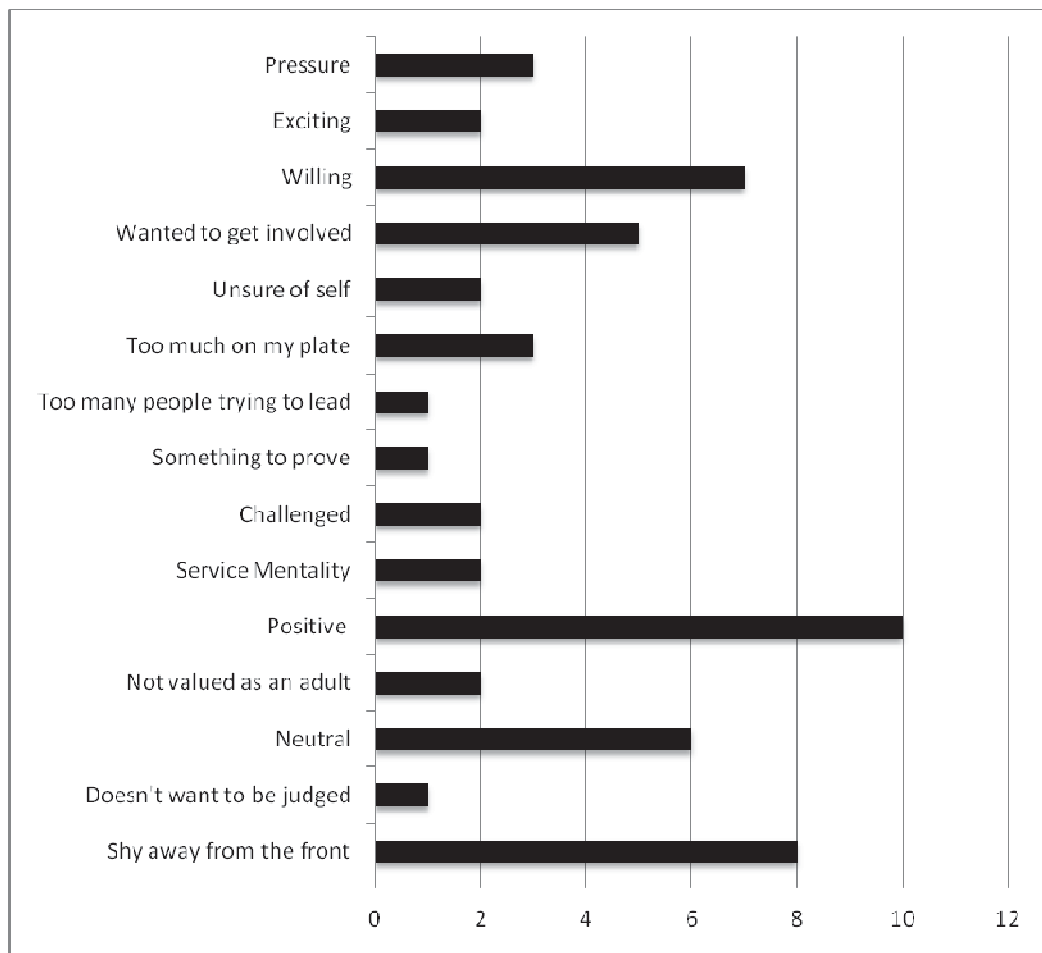


FIGURE 3

ATTITUDES
(Brooks 2012)

Practicing Leadership

There were sixteen respondents who were presently involved in leadership, or recently at their church, school, or place of work. Those who said that they practiced leadership at their schools were mainly class project situations. A few practiced leadership through activities that were outgrowths of school activities (community service, internships, tutoring). “I have a class officer position at Loma Linda, in our class, and also in other student organizations” (DF).

“I’m in charge of the ‘healthy neighborhoods’ project, which is basically medical students and other students from the different schools in Loma Linda. We go out into the San Bernardino community and we have different projects” (AB).

Those who were involved in leadership at church were typically involved with leading children, youth, or singing on a praise team, “Where I work at school I lead a chemistry lab. Also lead on the praise team at church. It depends on what they need” (CD) with some notable exceptions being of young adults who were voted to lead in an auxiliary (other) at their church that was not a part of the youth ministry of the church. “In community service, I’m the assistant leader, and we basically help the community with food and clothing. Last Sunday, we had an Easter program” (SS).

More than half of those who were practicing leadership did so in the local church setting (fifty-six percent). The fact that the amount of young adults who practiced leadership in church is significant because it lets me know that of all the places that have access to young adults, church is still a place where they can have an active role. So, when our young adults are not attending our churches, where are they getting their

leadership development? I would posit that a lack of church involvement will create a generation of young adults who are not invested in anything.

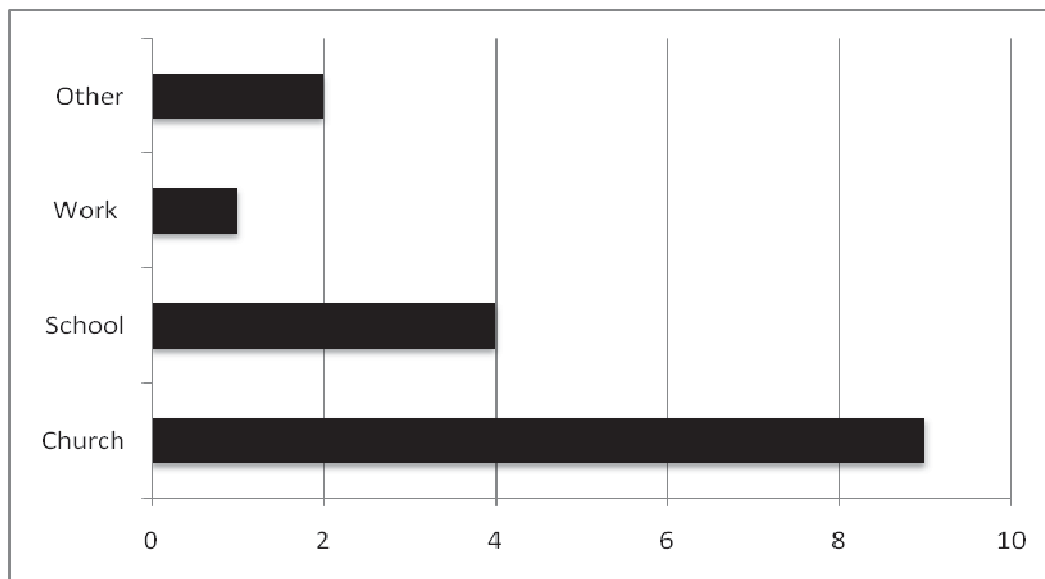


FIGURE 4

**WHERE ARE YOUNG ADULTS PRACTICING
LEADERSHIP?**
(Brooks 2012)

Leadership Definitions

In order to find out what the young adults believed leadership to be, two questions were asked: (1) to define leadership, and, (2) to tell me what leadership meant to them. From their answers, there was a wide range of ideas as to what makes a leader. What stood out among the leadership definitions was an expectation that the leader be a good example, be responsible, and have influence. This type of leader we will call the “role model” leader.

The role model leader would be someone who young adults see as a good person. He or she may not know it all, but is willing to let them in on what it takes to be successful, move forward, and experience fulfillment in their lives. This type of leader does not have to be charismatic, nor be the best at what they do. They must, however, be responsible in how they interact with people and be trusted to keep their word. The role model leader is aspirational, someone the young adult would like to be.

The next group of definitions that came out in their answers were: a guide, takes initiative, visionary, passionate and character. This type of leader has no problem charting a new course. They are deeply passionate about what they believe in or the ministry they are involved in. They can be counted on to have wild ideas, deep conviction, and contagious energy. I will call this type of leader the “pathfinder.” The term pathfinder is particular for Adventist groups because we have a youth auxiliary that is tasked to do just that—chart a course—and is the curriculum that is used for the youth to aid in the leadership development of teens. The skills and experiences gained here do not always translate to the young adult realm of existence. Do young adults want to be pathfinders? Not if it means that they will be treated like teenagers again.

Our next leadership definitions include inspirational, prepare others, serving, director, good follower, and delegator. These leadership attributes we find more often in our pastoral leaders or those committed to community service. I will call these the civic leaders. The civic leader is most interested in serving others. Their dedication to serving is inspirational; preparing others to do what they do is their lifeblood. This type of leader is effective among young adults who are interested in working in the church or in the non-profit sector because they get others involved in what they are doing. They do not

rely on their personality, but it is the work of helping, the work of doing for others that fuels them to keep going.

Interestingly, the things that these young adults least associated with in leadership were the things that I always thought embodied leaders: standing up front, mediator, flexible, and mentor. I'll call them the "traditional leader." Through investigating their attitudes, we may have found the types of leaders that young adults are willing to follow or, at the very least, who they will assist in the local church. This is not to say that a leader will not have these attributes or that these attributes are undesirable in the leaders that young adults will follow. What I am saying is that, when asked to define leadership, these answers were not repeated, and weren't as strong in the minds of the interviewees.

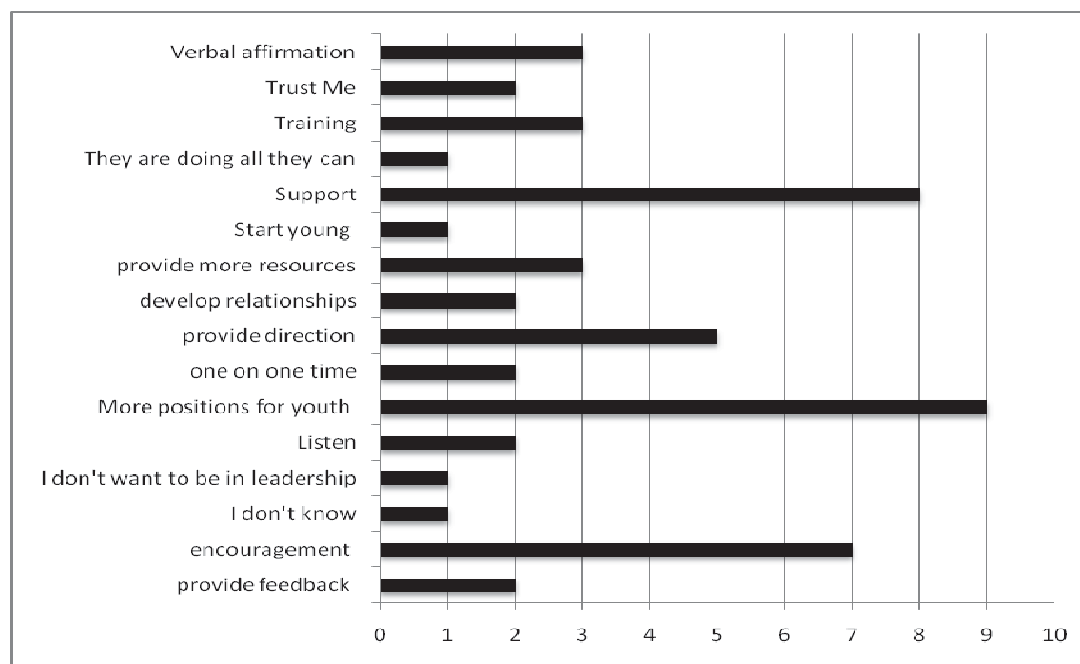


FIGURE 5

**LEADERSHIP DEFINITIONS:
WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH DO?**
(Brooks 2012)

I expected the answer(s) to this question to provide the blueprint for what local churches can do for their young adults currently in leadership and for future leaders. There were a number of responses to this question that made it seem like there were too many things on the list for the church to do. From “I don’t want to be in leadership” to “support,” there emerged a smaller and more cohesive subset that provided the information in a much more succinct and easy to understand manner.

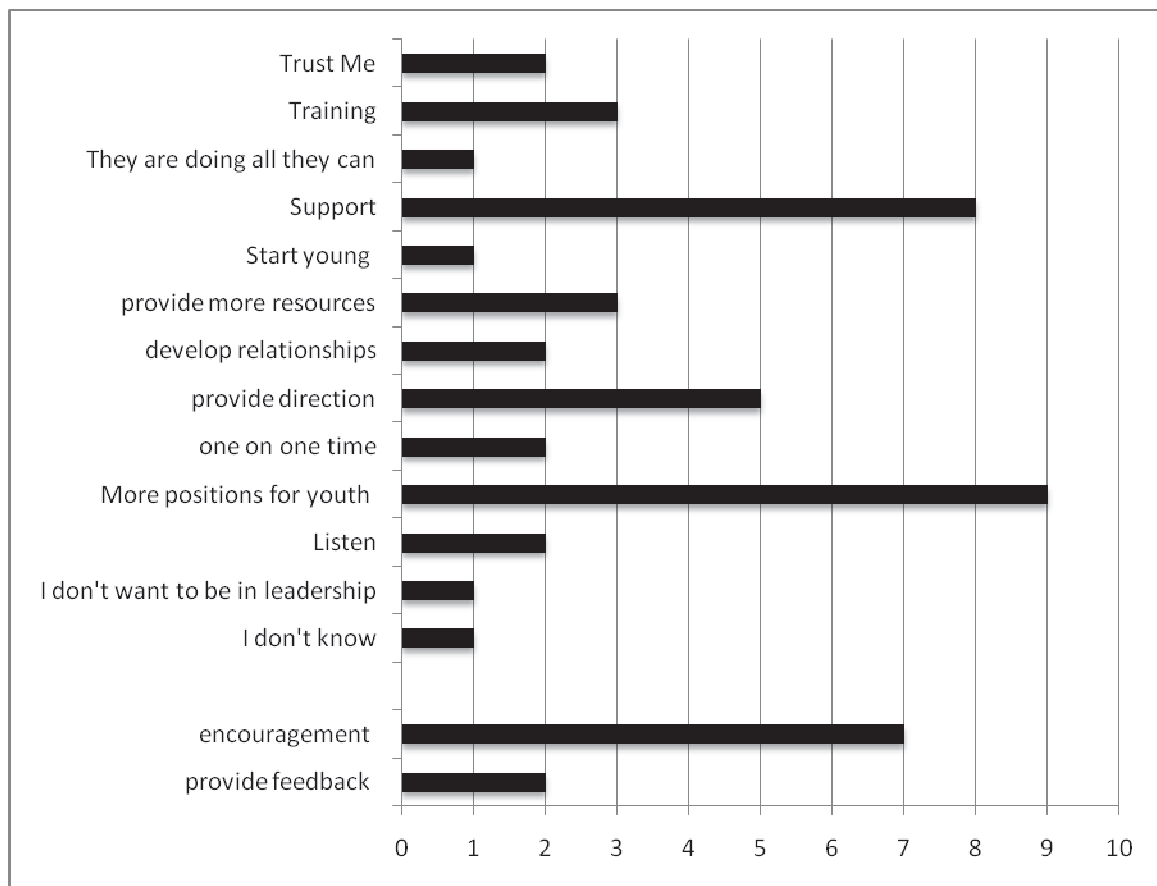


FIGURE 6

INITIAL RESPONSES
(Brooks 2012)

After grouping the answers into the groups Support, Develop and Train, this larger group was easier to manage and we can really see where the local church can do better in terms of the young adults in leadership.

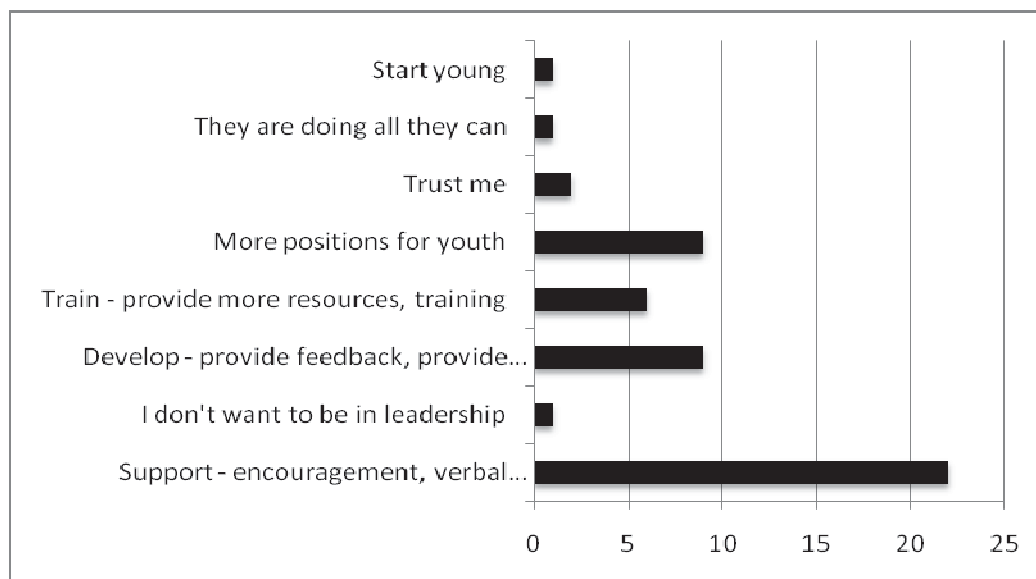


FIGURE 7

SIMPLIFIED RESPONSES
(Brooks 2012)

What African American young adults are looking for their churches to do is provide consistent and credible systems that will allow them to grow into leadership. Most of the churches reflected in this study do not have them. Of the young adults interviewed, only one made mention of mentorship at their church that allowed them to be familiar with being in leadership at a young age.

We each had a leader as a mentor. We got to learn hands on with a mentor. I think to have a mentoring group would be an amazing thing for any church. Especially for those youth who don't seem to be interested in

anything, to have somebody who was there already showing you is more reassuring (SMB).

These systems that can foster growth take into account the young adults as valuable members of the church, doing what they can to develop their talent so as not to lose them to another activity.

While systematic leadership transfer and training are something we can easily assume is needed, another outcome of this question was more positions for youth (eighteen percent). A better way to say this could be, more opportunities to lead, and not just on youth or young adult emphasis days at church. One respondent recounted an experience of shadowing one of the leaders at her church:

I remember from when I was younger, different churches that I had gone to that like, start grooming for leadership from very young. I remember once, when I was, I was like 8 years old, I was the junior treasurer that followed the treasurer around. So I think it's something that you have to start kind of young so that they kind of get an idea of the different positions of the churches are, so they can also find out where their interests lie and where their talent lies. So it's not just a last minute now we don't have anyone left. so it's you now, go ahead (AB).

It's those opportunities afforded to young adults (and teens) to be involved before having to be forced that goes a long way toward their involvement in leadership and having a vested interest in the success of the ministries at the church.

What should the African American local church do for its young adults? According to the data, the church should train, develop and support their young adults. They should be creating opportunities for young adults to lead and then trusting them to do so.

Did Your Church Drop the Ball?

The respondents who answered this question were split. From a total of fifteen responses to this question, seven (forty-seven percent) said yes, while eight (fifty-three percent) said no. Of the seven who said yes, the reasons given for where the church dropped the ball had to deal with not having support, being taken for granted, and not being valued. One frustrated respondent stated, “if the church would have let us have more leadership roles we’d probably have more youth by now.” While the feelings of another were expressed this way,

the mentality is what the older folk in the church say kinda goes. So they don’t really give the young people a chance to do stuff they would like to do it. It’s “this is the religion. [These are] the rules of the religion. Stick to it. Don’t stray from it. This is how it goes.” And you weren’t able to go around stuff or cater more to the needs of your peers (CS).

Although the above respondent was not angry, there was a shared frustration among African American young adults that is reflected in their words. Respondents to this question thought that their church was doing the best they could but, despite that, there were areas where they could do better. Among those who answered ‘No,’ they either had no expectation for the church to assist them in leadership development or they felt that opportunities were present even if they did not take advantage of them personally. Since the majority of the responses were ‘no’ as opposed to ‘yes,’ we can assume that church has not lost its role completely, but there is room for a more structured view of leadership development and, ultimately, transfer.



FIGURE 8

HOW DID THE CHURCH DROP THE BALL IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT?

(Brooks 2012)

Taken together, the ‘not valued’ (twenty-nine percent) and ‘no plan for me’ (twenty-nine percent) responses on the chart speak to a need for young adults to be taken seriously by their parents and older members of the church community. This desire to feel a part as a young adult is something that we will address in Chapter 6. The church must be able to give room for the young adult(s) to thrive while, at the same time, understanding that this period is very important as it relates to how they understand themselves and their roles in the church.

When young adults do not feel valued or that the Church has no plan for how they can meaningfully contribute to the life of the church, they are more likely to have a

negative view of church leadership. They will not seek to be involved and may, ultimately, walk away from church altogether.

What Has Helped in Your Leadership Development?

Whether they were in active leadership or not, the young adults could attribute their development, if any, to a number of factors. Those factors did include church, work, school, and even home.

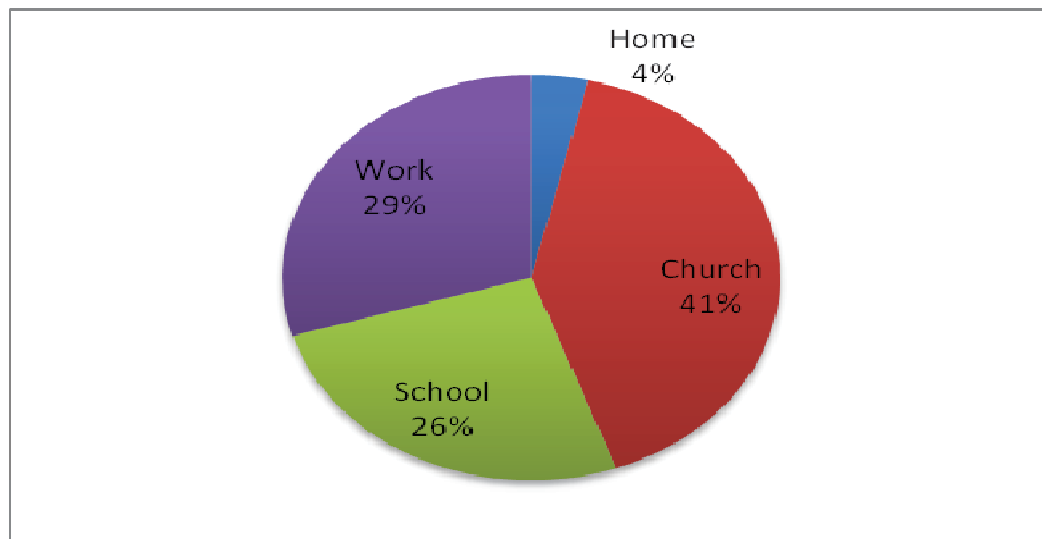


FIGURE 9

WHERE WERE YOU DEVELOPED? (Brooks 2012)

Although many young adults may not see the church as a large part of their development, the above pie chart shows from the respondents that the church had significant import in their development as leaders. After ascertaining where they received development, there were some additional questions that were asked about how were they

developed at school, work, or at church. What was done to assist you or what did you learn?

For the sole respondent who received development at home, he/she credited the relative with whom he/she lived, “I think because of the examples I have in my life. My grandmother is very strong in her leadership in my home, but when she talks about leading she always reflects on what she has learned from her mother” (SMB).

For the other areas, such as church, work, and school, different things were gleaned from the interviews. For those who gave church as a place of development, they spoke of having a position, observation, and learning to be on their own as things they received as part of their development.

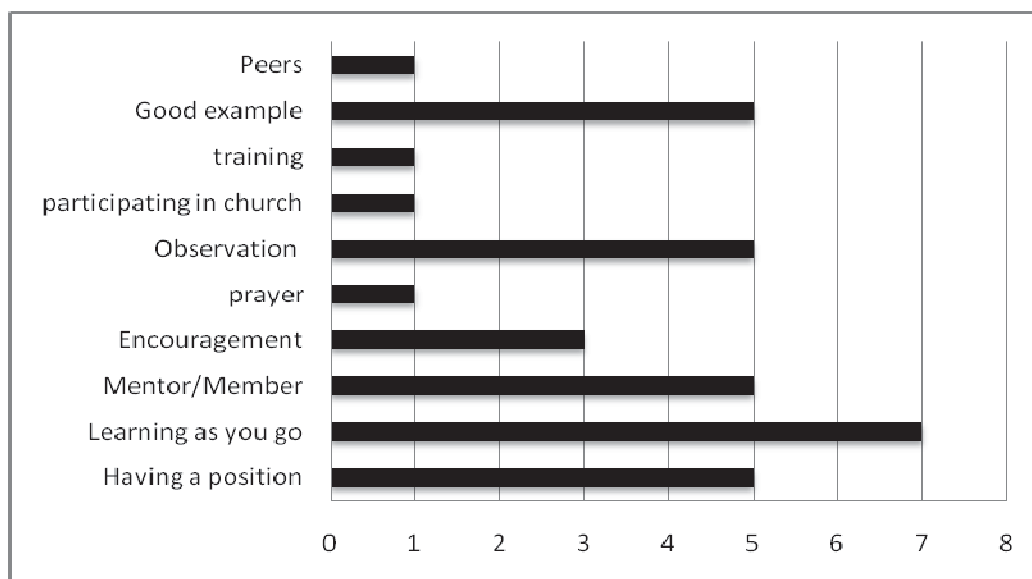


FIGURE 10

CHURCH HELPED DEVELOP
(Brooks 2012)

From school, the interviewees credit specific classes and trainings that helped them develop. Classes that had students work together in groups or had them present findings in front of their peers gave them confidence to believe they could be in leadership, even if they were not in active leadership at the time of our interview.

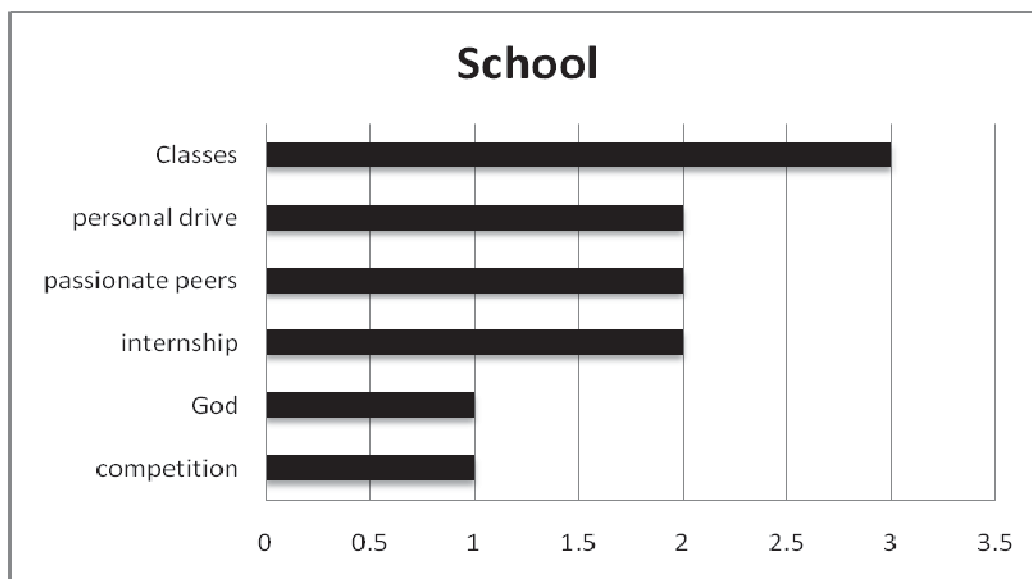


FIGURE 11

SCHOOL HELPED DEVELOP
(Brooks 2012)

For those who cited work as a place where they developed, having a mentor (thirty-six percent), having a good attitude (fourteen percent), compromise (fourteen percent), and dealing with authority (seven percent) were significant developmental tools gained in that environment. It is significant that leaders can be developed in many scenarios. I would like to contend that mentors still play a large role in the development of future leaders since mentors are mentioned in the workplace and in the church setting.

More young adults, however, stated that they were left to figure things out on their own in the church setting (twenty-one percent). This can leave the young adult with a negative view of the leaders while still having a positive view of church. This is further indication of what we found in our focus groups: Pressure to perform can adversely affect young adults and keep them from continuing to pursue or even be willing to be involved in leadership at the local level.

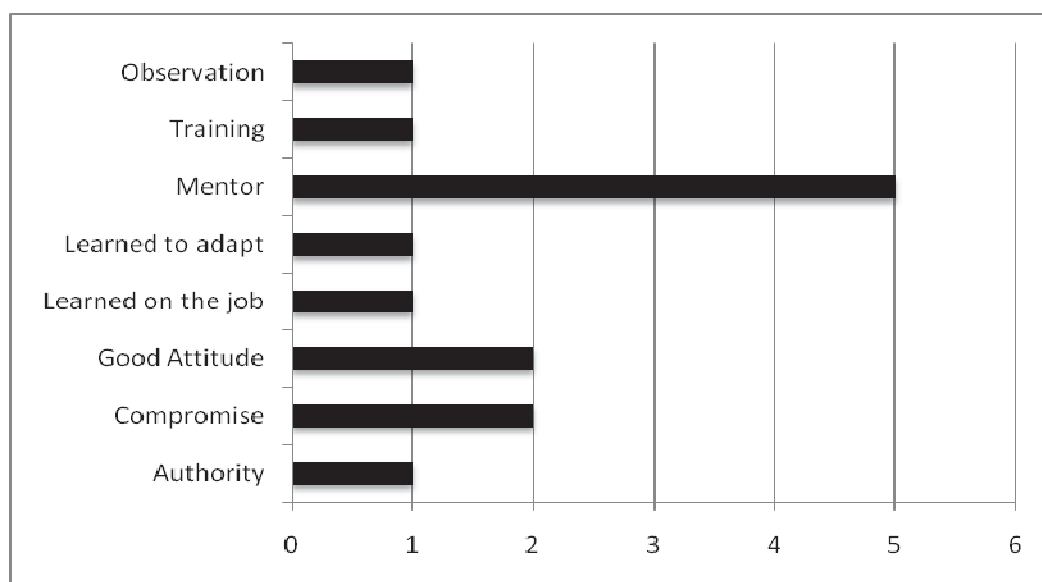


FIGURE 12

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT WORK:
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES**
(Brooks 2012)

The respondents reported their negative and positive experiences dealing with leadership at church, school, and work. The majority (forty-one percent) reflected on their church experiences. Although I did ask about experiences at school and work, the church experiences were the most common. This provides further evidence as to how

much influence the church can wield on leadership development, or the lack thereof, for African American young adults. As noted in the past, the church still does have a large influence on the church-going young adult. When we (the Church) use that influence to empower and support young adults, we see more of them willing to lead on the local church level.

Negative leadership experiences were mainly characterized by conflict. That conflict could have come from the young adult acting as a leader and not being able to motivate their people.

Sometimes the difficult thing for me as a leader was trying to compel everybody in that group who may not have had the same level of commitment or care, to move forward in a certain goal, or doing certain remedial tasks that you had to do over and over and over again in order to meet a goal or whatever; trying to get them motivated to do those types of things and do it proficiently. So, again I'm not the most vocal of people, so my personality kind of comes into it where I don't want to have to repeat myself, so that I think has been one of the most, that I can think of, the most negative times where what I would do in that situation, if they're not doing it, is to take it all on upon myself (RW).

A number of interviews felt that they were not valued as leaders or even to be trusted to work without help or supervision from an older member of the church:

And she made this big ole, had this big ole meeting about how reasons why me and [young person] should not like, you know [be leaders]. And one of her reasons was "they're too young." And my mom was with me and said, "What do you mean they're too young?" And she was like, "Yeah they're too young they can't be by themselves." And she was like I don't remember if they were 18 or 19, and they were like "yeah they're 19" and she said "What?" I think she thought we were like 15 or 16, and I was like "we've been at this church for a really long time now" (AP).

This speaks to another problem that seems to come up when we are looking for a transfer of leadership to the next generation. Unless this is the culture of a church, change will be slow in coming. Existing leaders find it hard to recognize young people as being

able to contribute to the church as adults because they have yet to see them as adults and not just the young ones. In this situation, it makes sense to have a system to magnify the fact that youth have reached the age of adulthood.

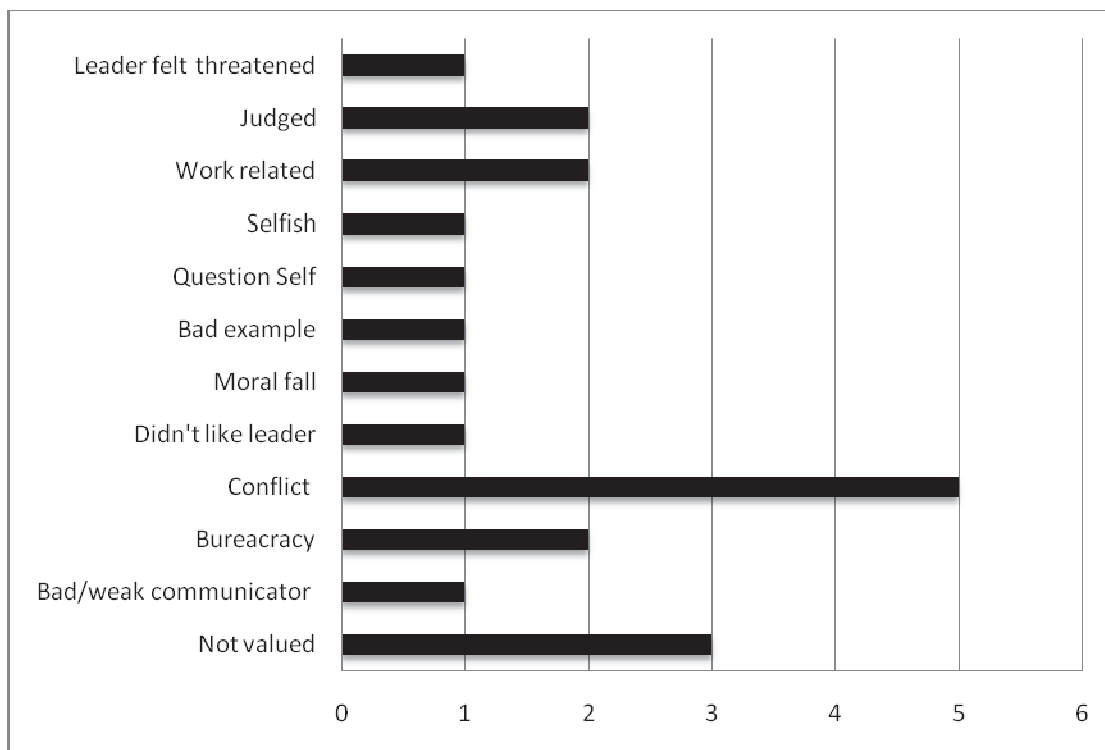


FIGURE 13
REASONS FOR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES
 (Brooks 2012)

The positive experiences recorded had the young adults enjoying successful projects with teams that were working together.

And just having that synergy between you as a leader and a person who is like-minded, you kind of have a back up. You have somebody who is working with you in the same mindset, towards a similar goal. So, uh, that situation it worked out really well, I wasn't always the one who had to step in and put my foot down, but I had someone who I could confer with and get their perspective (DF).

The young adults thought working with leaders who were friendly and approachable also made their experiences with leadership positive ones. When allowed to lead and receiving support from the team or the church, young adults also felt better about leadership and leading.

Ever since I started going to [church] I got involved quickly getting to know people and the fellowship. I loved being voted as special events coordinator for the youth. I loved being the special events coordinator; planning events and having people who were older than me follow my directions. It felt good for me to see people happy with what I planned (SMB).

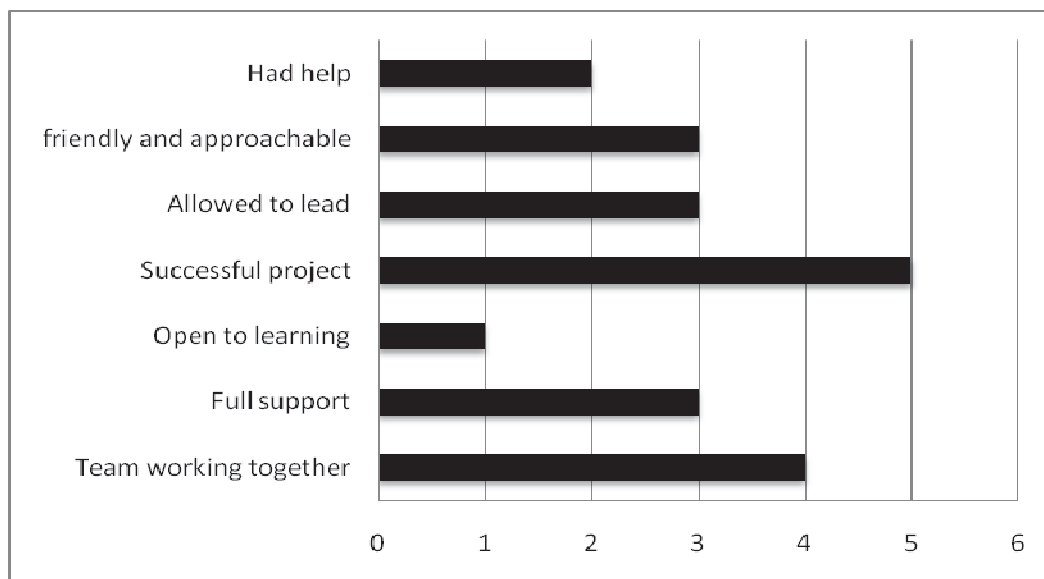


FIGURE 14

POSITIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES
(Brooks 2012)

Summary

Young adults want to be included in local church leadership. The unfortunate reality of many local churches is young adults are not valued. When they do not feel

valued by the Church, young adults will gravitate to those places and people that give them support. The local church still remains a place where church-going young adults can be impacted positively towards leadership. The current leadership transfer of the Nominating Committee may need to be revamped in favor of a more organic change, where young adults can be included, trained, and/or mentored into leadership. Young adults are looking to be trained, developed and supported in positions of the church that may not have traditionally had someone in their twenties leading out. While the reasons for their lack of involvement are many, it is of particular import for the local church to create systems that will help to make young adults take ownership of the whole church and not just youth ministry or music ministry. The attitudes of African American young adults are generally positive. There seems to be certain types of leadership that appeals most to urban young adults. These have been characterized as the role model, pathfinder, civic leader, or the traditional leader. In our next chapter, I will begin to lay the groundwork and thinking that has to be implemented in order to create a culture for young adults to be involved in leadership.

CHAPTER 6

THE FOUNDATION FOR CULTURE CHANGE

One of the foundational systems that can be helpful to developing a way to promote leadership among African American young adults can be found in the Human Resource frame. The focus of this chapter will be to explain the Human Resource frame and the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. These concepts are integral to discussing a model or pilot program for developing leadership capacities in African American young adults in San Bernardino. Understanding the Human Resource frame allows church leaders to see that the young adults in their midst not only have value but, by tapping into the young adult resources, talents, and energy, churches and the young adults in them can benefit.

The Human Resource Frame

The problems identified in the previous section are all human problems and, as such, we want to provide an environment where these problems can be resolved. They can be resolved by knowing how to invest in the lives of the humans (in this case, young adults) in the organization (in this case, the Adventist church). The Human Resource frame offers another possibility: an organization (the church) should be energizing, productive, and mutually rewarding. The Human Resource frame centers on how characteristics of organizations and people shape what they do for one another (Church 2000, 143).

The Human Resource frame is built around certain core assumptions. Each of these assumptions affects the relationship between the organization (Church) and employees (young adults). These assumptions highlight the relationship:

TABLE 9
ASSUMPTIONS
(Bolman and Deal 2008; Brooks 2012)

Assumptions	Comparison to Focus group responses	Quotes showing HR related needs
Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse	The local church should be a place where young adults can feel needed instead of used.	“you don’t consult with me first. And I’m an adult, yes I’m still a student, but I’m an adult. And I don’t, I feel more so they treat us like we’re children rather than adults” (JS)
People and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities.	Young adults and the local church share mutual needs. The church needs young people to be the hands and feet, and young people need the church to be supportive.	A—We had a lot of good ideas, programs... S—great ideas... A—we wrote ‘em down, we made lists and stuff. And it just didn’t happen because we didn’t have support (AP & SM)
When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. Individuals are exploited or exploit the organization—or both become victims.	When there are no young people active in a church, both suffer. The absent youth gains nothing, and the church is stifled.	“We never had enough youth days, it was always... one every six months. [And] even with that it was limited: the Elder had to be up there, special music was done by the adults, the sermon was done by the pastor” (VM)
A good fit benefits both. Individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed (Bolman and Deal 2008, 1477)	A good fit does benefit the church and the young adult. The church becomes attractional, and the young adult gains skills, support, and connection.	“Once the vision was played out they were in full support. Everybody kinda [fell] in and we just moved beautifully. No stress. They did things without me having to ask or compel, try to motivate them. It just made everything real easy. To me those are the best situation; when you have a team of people who buy into the idea and are pushing as hard as you are” (RW)

The Adventist church exists to preach the everlasting gospel to the world but, at the local level, more of our churches want to fulfill the work of meeting human needs as outlined by the prophet Isaiah, “the Lord has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken, to tell the captives they are free, and to tell the prisoners they are released” (Isa. 61:1).

Within every local church is the ability to do tremendous good to the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, and the needy inhabitants of our neighborhoods. African American young adults want to be a part of that good. When our churches can bless others through service, worship, or fellowship, we continue a pattern that started with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-5), Isaac (Gen. 25:11), and Jacob (Gen. 32:26-29). When the church follows God’s lead by blessing its young adults through the principles of the Human Resource frame, these same young adults will desire to be a blessing to others. This creates a culture where not only blessing is present, but young adults are welcome.

The discussion of needs becomes more pronounced when we examine the basic needs of the African American Adventist young adult: Emergent Black Christian young adulthood is that developmental stage of life in which a Black Christian young person enters into a sanctifying and socializing process of life (McCray 1992, 34). Looking at what we have learned as needs from the standpoint of Arnett’s emerging adults, the local church has a greater responsibility to find ways to meet the varying needs of young adults in order to keep them long enough to teach them to lead. Timothy Nixon, DMin, in his article, “*Where have all the Youth Leaders Gone*,” quotes a senior fellow from the Brookings Institution, William Galston, who identified seven different characteristics of the emerging adult:

1. Unmarried (no committed relationship)
2. Tiny fraction have military service
3. Between episodic education and temporary jobs
4. Between living alone and living with their parents
5. Live outside institutions and are without institutional structure
6. Living without a script (making up life as they go)
7. Despite their age, they are not sure they are adults

The underlying and unifying thread of emerging young adults, African American and otherwise, is transition. Young adults are being formed and learning to make meaning (Parks 2000, 1594), while everything in their lives is in flux. They are discovering what their needs are. When we create a situation where needs are being met, conditions or elements in the environment allow people to survive and evolve (Nixon 2009, 130-131).

Everyone has basic needs. Churches have needs. Adults have needs. Young adults have needs. The psychologist, Abraham Maslow, developed one of the most influential theories about needs. His hierarchy of Human Needs remains widely used today and is the basis by which the human resource frame is built. Maslow's hierarchy grouped human needs into five basic categories, with self-actualization at the top:

1. Physiological—needs for oxygen, water, food, physical health, and comfort
2. Safety—to be safe from danger, attack, and threat
3. Belongingness and love—needs for positive and loving relationships with other people.
4. Esteem—needs to feel valued and value oneself
5. Self-actualization—needs to develop to one's fullest, actualize one's potential (Bolman and Deal 2008, 1501).

Although many have attempted to poke holes and invalidate his theory, Maslow's ideas continue to prove long lasting as they relate to how humans value needs. While each of these values is significant in the life of young adults, this research allows us to be more specific. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used as a template for emerging adults, in general, and African American young adults, in particular. My research produced the following list of needs for young adults to be active in leadership:

1. Psychological—African American young adults need to be treated like fully realized adults, despite their lack of experience.
2. Support—African American young adults need to know that their local church will support them
3. Belonging—African American young adults need to be in a church that not only allows them to belong, but their friends too.
4. Esteem—African American young adults need to be affirmed by the local church
5. Self-actualization through Service—African American young adults need opportunities to see that their potential can be reached through service in the local church and community.

Another way to look at these needs could be to categorize them as hungers. For young adults, in particular, and leaders, in general, there are five hungers that exemplify this growing absence of leadership. These hungers (Parks 2005, 193) or desires include:

- A desire to exercise personal agency,
- For authority that provides orientation and reassurance,
- For tools to deal with the many complexities arising from political, technological, and economic realities that make this world more interconnected;
- For the ability to adapt to these changes in a way that prepares them for unprecedented changes,
- A way to exercise a moral imagination and moral courage while developing through emerging adulthood.

An example can be found in one of our respondents we'll call Dale. Dale has attended his current church for the majority of his life. Throughout his years, he has been encouraged to use his particular gifts to enhance the worship at the church. His gifts were not readily accepted but, because the church valued him, they continued to encourage him. He laments that all of his friends didn't seem to get the same kind of treatment.

As (young) people mature, conflict intensifies (Bolman and Deal 2008, 1543). What can ultimately happen and what I have seen happen in their church attendance and from my focus groups is:

1. They withdraw—through chronic absenteeism or by quitting. I have witnessed young people “voting with their feet” or just not showing up for services set aside for them.
2. They stay in the church but withdraw psychologically, becoming indifferent, passive and apathetic. Youth pastors traditionally see this with those in their late teens who believe that the church may not be relevant for them. They show up, but begin to count down the days to when they will be moving away to college.
3. They resist by restricting output, deception, featherbedding, or sabotage. This is not something that I have seen or heard in focus groups, but I will pay attention to anything that may support this in future interviews.
4. They try to climb the hierarchy to better jobs. For my purposes, what I see is young adults moving to the “it” church where they can be a spectator, but not be expected to contribute.
5. They form alliances (such as labor unions) to redress the power imbalance. More often than not, young adults may join with like-minded young adults to create new ministries or auxiliaries that work outside of the general church structure, or just for the purposes of fellowship, similar to exiles (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 357).
6. They teach their children to believe that work is unrewarding and hopes for advancement are slim. This is a result I see in older members of the church who feel that their own experience as a young person or youth in the church was sabotaged by the older members who did not value them.

Among these young adults, we see that the church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture (Kinnaman and

Hawkins 2011, 243). When young adults are not valued as a resource for the ministry and not just pew warmers, I would contend, then, that the church is not adequately preparing young adults to carry on in leadership either. As recorded in the earlier chapter, young adults struggle with wanting to be in leadership when they are not valued as adults, when they are taken for granted, and if there is no plan for them to be a part of the fabric of the church. Utilizing a model of young adult ministry that would allow for the young adults to belong, while they are becoming better Adventist leaders, would give room for them to know and be known in the deepest ways possible so positive spiritual growth can be given every opportunity to occur (Rochester 2009, 626).

Assumption 1: The Church is Here for You

In the grand scheme of things, we want young adults to know that the Church is here for them. This would fulfill the first assumption of the Human Resource frame: Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse (Bolman and Deal 2008, 1475). When young adults don't see their church as a welcoming place, as stated in my focus groups, they will not believe that the church is there for them. Young adults who attend the church feel a kinship to anyone who is in their age range and may not look like the church kids. If the church can't welcome them, they don't welcome me.

Based on the interview data, young adults wanted their church to value them as individuals who actually have something to contribute, rather than stand-ins for the people who didn't show up, or back-ups because the current leader didn't plan well.

**Assumption 2: Young Adults Need the Church
and the Church Needs Young Adults**

Not lost in our discussions about African American young adults in leadership is the fact that the church needs them. It needs their energy and their ideas. It needs their time and attention. A wonderful point that is seen in the interviews was the influence that the church has on the development of leadership capacities in young adults. African American young adults are traditionally more religious than other ethnicities. On every measure of religiosity in my research, they were more religious than other emerging adults (Arnett 2004, 178).

African American young adults want opportunities at their home churches to use their talents, sometimes in non-traditional ways. We must allow them to look at what we have going and give them the chance to completely re-write what we do. Our challenge many times is that when young adults want to do something different, they are hindered by those who are resistant to change, as we heard from our focus groups. This feeds into the lack of young adults and gives them those negative leadership experiences. We need new architects to design interconnected approaches to faith transference. We need to rethink our assumptions and we need the creativity, honesty, and vitality of the next generation to help us (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 160).

The Adventist church is supposed to be a denominational movement, willing to re-introduce itself through the prism of its young adult population to continue to share the truths of the 3rd angel's message and spread the Advent message to all the world in My generation (Holbrook 2005, xii).

Assumption 3: A Poor Connection Between Church and Young Adults Benefits No One

When the church is not connecting with its young adults, it is on the slow road to its own demise. These young people are not walking away from faith, they are putting involvement in church on hold (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 156). The church loses out on vitality and creativity while the young adults lose a valuable place of experimentation of how to share their faith and develop as leaders. As a result, the church becomes a cold place where tradition rules and there are no new ideas, no new blood. This feeds into the cycle of leaders not changing and starting to believe that their leadership is a guarantee, a position that belongs to them until they can no longer function in it.

The church may add to the roll in these situations, but it will always be in fits and starts, from transfer members repeating a cycle of traditional non-growing leadership with no leadership transfer.

Assumption 4: When We Work Together, We Grow Together

In many of the positive leadership experiences shared by the young adults who were interviewed, the common thread was people working together. “I think at least for me, being in a position of leadership in the Sabbath school, I’m always learning something from the youth. That’s one of the things that I’ve learned about being a leader is that you always have to be open to learn things. Because a lot of what you’ll be doing when you’re leading is learning from those people” (MH).

“One of the good experiences I’ve had at this church. Do more things that are fun and still Christ like. I was part of the team to plan social for the youth. It was great experience and we had more people than we expected” (SS).

“It felt good for me to see people happy with what I planned. Even when I worked with children’s ministry, with Sis. Brown, I helped in the organizing and making sure the other people knew all the kids in their groups. It felt good having the respect of the people. Even people asking for help made me feel good. Having control helps me to work things out. To be able to be given the respect to get these things done feels good” (SMB).

In working together with young adults, the church is creating covenantal relationships. These types of relationships rest on a shared commitment to ideas, to being open to influence, and to filling deep needs. Covenantal relationships enable the church to be hospitable to the unusual person and unusual ideas. This allows young adults to be embraced as a whole person, meeting them where they are and, ultimately, building the church.

The Five Practices

In this section, I will outline the Five practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 119) for use at the local church level. I intend to show how these practices correlate to my findings from focus groups, interviews, as well as stated needs addressed in literature review. I believe the practices provide an integrating idea that holds together a number of themes and motifs discovered in focus groups and interviews in order to construct a truly biblical basis of mission for urban young adults (Van Engen 1996). Using a succession of single practices, as they relate to developing young adult

leadership at the local church level, a melody can indeed be created that is unique to each church that employs them.

TABLE 10
THE 5 PRACTICES
(Bolman and Deal 2008)

Model the way	1. Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals. 2. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
Inspire Shared Vision	3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. 4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenge the process	5. Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve. 6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
Enable others to act	7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. 8. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.
Encourage the heart	9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. 10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Model the Way

The interviews with youth pastors revealed that youth pastors valued strong mentors when they began in ministry. I found that this also holds true for emerging adults in the congregation. The interviews with young adults however, revealed that they did not value mentors as much as they valued good examples. Not trying to draw a line of distinction between the examples and the mentors, from our conversations, the young adults actually want the mentors to help them in the leadership journey. But, they desired

models who would show them how they can lead in their own capacities/gifts/talents. This is magnified with the first attribute of the five practices.

While I have always seen mentoring as an essential part of leadership development, more of the young adults chose to see people as examples or models for them. They want to see people actually living what they are talking about. One barrier to this is the lack of authenticity, many times from older members when dealing with the young adults. This does not lead to positive modeling opportunities.

Teaching others to model the values of the church requires that we know what our values are. In the example of the local church, a set of values will need to be created and then taught to our group of potential leaders. These values could include a commitment to building leaders for the church and community; raising the number of young adult leaders in our local church, and helping someone else grow in leadership. These values would need to not only be shared by the church as a whole, but intersect with those held by emerging adults in transition.

Clarifying the expectations of young adults in the local church or in any endeavor gives them the opportunity to measure up against what they already have going on in their lives. As we learned in our interviews of young adults, they don't want to be left "hanging" because someone did not tell them what they were specifically responsible for. They also don't want to be taken for granted. There must be a clear guideline of what is expected of each person who commits to being a part of the young adult team. We ask for a time commitment of one year; after that we will delineate what the expectation would be for each quarter's endeavor(s).

The introduction of our young adults to mentors in the local church would be a key component at this stage. These mentors would have to be people in the church who have led in one capacity or another. They would not be required to presently be in leadership. These mentors would help these young people put into practice what they believe and giving them the freedom to understand that there is more that we value in common than what keeps us apart generationally. The preference would be that the mentor models would not be the youth pastor of the church. More often than not, they would be people who are already participating in or supportive of the youth ministry of the church.

These mentors would be required to spend some time with our young adults outside of the church business. Because our young adults value example at such a high level, we want to give our mentors and young adults opportunities to know each other in a way that would allow the young adult to know that this person is someone they would want to emulate.

Inspire Shared Vision

The vision of every local church is different. The young adults interviewed were positively impacted by experiences where everyone was on the same page and moving in the same direction. This shared vision allows for all to have a hand in the process and, as a result, be invested in the outcome.

Once the vision was played out they were in full support. Everybody kinda [fell] in and we just moved beautifully. No stress. They did things without me having to ask or compel, try to motivate them. It just made everything real easy. To me those are the best situation; when you have a team of people who buy into the idea and are pushing as hard as you are (RW).

Exemplary leaders are forward looking, but cannot just be the leader's vision. It must be a shared vision (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 1496). This shared vision is accomplished when we help young adults imagine the possibilities and find common purpose. Can we imagine church ministries that run without the bureaucratic miasma created in all the many committees in our churches? Can we have a weekly service and not print a bulletin? Is it possible for us to be involved in community action and not just talk about being involved in community action?

African American young adults are looking for leaders who will show them how their unique gifts can be used in the service of the local church, in a way that can be comfortable to them. Those who are in leadership must include young adults in their vision casting and then show them how they can be effective in achieving said vision.

Challenge the Process

Young adults want to make a name for themselves and frequently want to know what they can do differently than those who came before, whether it was last week or last year. The local church must give them the opportunity to challenge everything done in years past. In order to truly challenge the process, young adults would be asked to review what took place during the previous year of the church. What were the good things? What were the things that they found were not so good? We would then set about in the current year to improve on the challenges and seek to repeat the successes. It would be very important for mentors to be willing to let the young adults ask the questions that we may feel uncomfortable with. In doing this, we would be encouraging a type of Case-in-point adaptive leadership that allows for creativity and discipline (Van Engen 1996, 43).

To truly challenge the process these leaders will be taught to seize the initiative and exercise oversight. Oversight is the ability to think outside of existing norms and traditional attitudes. We are told that leadership is the study of how men and women guide others through adversity, uncertainty and hardship. It is also important to note how leaders actively seek to disturb the status quo (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 2771). Disturbing the status quo is exactly what we want our leaders to be prepared to do. In some cases, what is required are acts of leadership that assist [young] people in moving beyond the edge of familiar patterns in the unknown terrain of greater complexity, new learning, and new behaviors (Parks 2005, 166).

Some young ladies attending one of the churches profiled found themselves in a bit of a bind with a former leader who wasn't ready to accept them as leaders for a department because of their age. The girls did not give up or walk away. They learned the system and bided their time. The following year, after church elections, they now were in charge and sought to do all of the things that they thought were possible. It has not been an easy road, but they are pleased that they are able to participate in the mission of the church through their service.

Enable Others to Act

Another point found in our interviews was that when we value our young adults, allow them control and support them, whether they succeed or fail, they are more likely to try again. When they do not have the support of the local church, and they fail or succeed, they are more likely to not try again. In order to get young adults to want to try

again, it is incumbent on the local church to be supportive and give them verbal affirmations.

In order to create an environment where young adults feel like they can be encouraged to act, youth pastors and sole pastors must be involved. Pastors must see the value of the young adults in their midst. Mentors play a large role in encouraging young adults. This mixing of young adults, pastor(s) and mentors allows for new ideas and learning to work with a new group of people. Here we have the opportunity to build collaboration with the young adults. They gain relationships and the pastors gain the energy of the young people to meet the vision of the church. When the pastors and mentors work together with the young adults, an enabling atmosphere is created. Young adults will feel valued and pastors gain a group of people who have bought into the vision.

Barry, a youth assistant at his church, tells of how in his church the youth had been limited for years in what they were allowed to participate when it came to the worship service. It wasn't until he went away to school that he became aware that it was possible to be involved in so many other levels. When he returned home, he came back to a church with new leadership. This new leadership gave him the freedom to preach and organize the young people to be active in the church. His new pastor worked with him (fostering collaboration). He created a climate of trust by allowing the young adults to say what they wanted to accomplish, and catering to their needs, without excluding the older members.

I was able to see this young man put together an evangelistic program for youth and young adults which had not been done before in years. This was accomplished

because his pastor worked with him, supported him, and then enabled him to make something happen. Every situation will not be like that one, but it helps to know that they exist.

Encourage the Heart

Successful leaders have high expectations of themselves and of those who work with them (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 4582). As leaders, we need to expect the best and then personalize our recognition of those people who participated in the process.

More than getting everything right, young adults want to know that what they belong to, the church, does value their time and their service. Encouragement was a large part of what young adults asked that the church do to help them in their development.

At the close of the year, the local pastor along with the leaders of the church could sponsor an event to show appreciation for the hard work, determination, and collaboration shown by the young adults. We would include the mentors for special recognition for their support during the year as well. The vision of the church would be revisited for the whole church. Each young adult would be recognized for their specific participation in the events and or planning of the events at the local church during the year. At the close of the event, the next team of young adult leaders can be announced and given the mandate for the following year. All in attendance would affirm the prior year's leaders and mentors and encourage the new year's participants.

Recently, some young people planned an event that initially got some push back from the church they attend. Although the youth pastor wasn't confident in the outcome, he felt that it was important to not only take the chance with the young people, but

support them all the way. When the event was over, the youth pastor made sure to take the time to tell all who would listen that the youth leader, we'll call her Jill, made the event possible.

Summary

The Human Resource frame allows for the church to be aware of and pay particular attention to the needs of young adults. They need to know that they are seen as adults. They need to know their local church supports them and values their creativity and contributions. The Church needs young adults just as much as the young adults need the church. It is the church that holds significant influence over the leadership development of young adults who attend. It serves the church's best interests to not ignore the young adults in their midst but to do everything they can to work hand in hand with them. When the church works with its young adults, creating covenantal relationships, both benefit.

The leadership practices give us the foundational activities to prepare African American young adult leaders for the local church. A culture of leadership can be formed by getting young adults to be active in participating in an annual exercise of modeling, sharing vision, challenging past processes, enabling them to act, and encouraging the heart. With the melody of the practices and the charting of the Human Resource frame, I think we are now ready to make some music. In the next chapter, I will revisit the Adventist top ten young adult ministry models and contrast them against what we learned in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, we learned the reasons why many African American young adults are not participating in leadership. In Chapter 5, we learned that young

adults need to be heard, valued and supported. Next, we will see what models exist within the Adventist church that can address those issues, but, more importantly, how we can develop leaders.

CHAPTER 7

EXISTING MODELS COMPARED TO RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Culture often determines the kinds of music we listen to most. Many of us learn to appreciate the twang of country or the lilting tones of folk music, but we all hold within us music that drives us when we want to truly feel alive. We use music to compel us when we need to exercise. Music is all around us. Jay Z said, “when you think about it... you realize that the beat is everywhere, you just have to tap into it” (Jay 2010, 230). We want to find the beat of young adult leadership and identify what the music can ultimately sound like.

In this chapter, the data from my findings informs a change in the development of new young adult leaders. I propose arguing the need for capacity building with the Human Resource frame, supported with the five practices of exemplary leadership. The challenge that I see now after reviewing my data is that there is no one program or practice that will meet the needs of all young adults. There are a number of programs that we can employ. We will then place my data against the existing successful models and see what would be the best fit in light of the needs of African American young adults.

A realistic future state of the African American churches in San Bernardino is to see a continuum of youth and young adult development. Ideally, the youth and young adults would feel valued and empowered at each level of church leadership. From the local church to the county (which does not exist), and to the Conference level, young

people would have representation and influence. Young adults would be active as mentors to their high school and junior high brothers and sisters. At the very least, having a competent youth leader (volunteer) or pastor (professional) at each church would be a good future. These youth leaders would work together to develop a federation of youth and young adult leaders that would support the initiatives of the Associate Youth Director of the SECC.

Adults can gain immeasurable insight from youth if they would make themselves available to discern it. Input that organizations receive from youth partners can improve communities in a way that non-empowering communities cannot. In our situation, I would like to see our urban African American churches in the SECC improved because of the active involvement of young people and young adults in conjunction with existing inter-generational leadership.

In the future state, young adult ministry would be committed to raising leaders from within the ministry. These leaders would then practice “reproductive leadership,” meaning the ability to raise up and reproduce leaders from within the community (Arzola 2008, 88). These leaders would have the support of a community that sees youth empowerment like a three-legged stool; each leg of the stool would represent a vital aspect of true empowerment:

Opportunity—see youth. Youth all over the world have the potential to become empowered individuals, but only those who have opportunities will reach their full potential.

Skill—teach youth. We help those young people by teaching them necessary skills and highlighting their unique gifts, placing them in positions to be successful.

Trust—believe in youth. Youth with opportunities and skills still need adults to trust them enough to gradually let go, so they can do what they're destined to do (Curtis 2008, 9).

The responses from my interviews support the ideals of true empowerment. The young adults I interviewed want to see their churches provide opportunities for them to lead, but not necessarily in the traditional sense, meaning they don't want to have to stand in the front of the church to read or explain what they will be doing. They do want people to teach them and lead them in improving themselves, not only in things that are applicable to church, but also applicable in life. They want to be able to trust their leaders and be trusted by their leaders to be creative, think differently about ministry and how old traditions can be transformed by changing the tune.

This journey began for me as a question. In the subsequent years as I have been talking and interviewing, others have presented models that are successful in young adult ministry. I will review each of the top ten models and see which may be the best fit in light of my research. We introduced the "top 10" earlier in Chapter 2, and with the structure of the Human Resource frame and the melody of the leadership practices, I believe we can see a few musical arrangements that may work within an African American context.

The Lost and Found Model

Since this model is predicated on the idea that every person is lost, it places a large emphasis on the gifts of the church or community of faith in reclamation. The Biblical basis of this model is found in Luke 15: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Each story has within it a different circumstance by which one could be lost. One

could be unaware, or aware but not able to get out of their situation, or so lost that you can be a danger to yourself. There is a celebratory aspect when a lost person is brought back to the faith. Young adults are always willing to engage in celebration or a party. Celebration is a key to our exemplary leadership principles where we are reminded to encourage the heart.

Although our African American young adults identify with many of their unchurched friends, they have made a decision to be at the church regularly and, thus, would not be looked at as lost. This model allows for young adults to be involved in ministry but does not provide opportunities for these same young adults to be prepared to lead in any other aspect of church life. While this would be a good ministry model for evangelism, based on what we heard from African American young adults, this would not make the grade for leadership development in the local church.

The Wholistic Worship Model

This model looks at all of life as worship. We are in worship, not only in our corporate gatherings, but also when we observe life, when we go to work, or when we sleep. This model seeks to incorporate worship into everything with which the young adults are involved. Our research didn't show young adults desiring a better worship experience; that was not a part of the study. This model claims to be successful, but would be most impactful for African American young adults who may be seeking a better relationship with God; perhaps through worship retreats or learning spiritual practices in order to live in constant communion with God and be about his business (Evangelism 2011, 11).

The Discipleship Model

Instead of a movement or event, discipleship is a journey. It involves coming alongside others, teaching, listening, verbalizing, questioning, testifying, growing and learning (Evangelism 2011, 13). The discipleship model values young adults by seeking to have them placed with a mentor and seeks their development through spending time and creating experiences. The disciple would then be engaged in a lifelong task of maturing as an Adventist Christian.

Aspects of the discipleship model can be applied in our settings based on the needs of young adults to be valued and seeking opportunities for growth. This model can also be used to address leadership outcomes by discipling the young adult toward leadership. While leadership may not be a primary outcome, the influence of the mentor can lead the disciple to want to disciple others on a smaller or larger scale.

Through mentorship, the discipleship model can integrate our five practices of leadership: modeling the way and inspiring a vision through interaction with a mentor. Challenging the process would be an ongoing revisiting of past issues, also with a mentor. Enabling the disciple to act and encouraging the heart could be a combination of mentor encouragement and small activities created within the church community to further support the young adult. A church that would be willing to employ this discipleship model would be moving in the right direction to creating new leaders.

Mentoring Urban Young Adults

This area of mentoring is one that I've struggled with since being a volunteer in youth ministry. I have always sought out mentors to guide what my activities would be

and how I was to comport myself in leadership at the local church level. Inasmuch as that was something that I desired, I never got that older church member to come alongside me and walk with me. Yet, here I am. What was the difference? I sought the aspects that I saw in others that I wanted to emulate, so, in effect, I've been mentored by many and continue to seek mentoring now.

In working with African American young adults, I've thought it very important to involve some aspect of mentoring. For me, I've spent time attempting to mentor those who I saw could replace me.

While some seek mentors, many of our youth are at best alienated and at worst completely separated from adults who can provide them much needed help. They do not choose mentors on their own, either because they don't see the importance of such a relationship, or because they don't know of any adults who would take that much interest in them. Either way, young men and women would respond enthusiastically, over time, to positive adult mentors (Larson and Free 2002, 111).

From my own experience, and from what we hear coming from focus groups and the young adults interviewed, for the local church leader, there are some specific strategies that can be employed to make disciples in the local church.

Select

From the interviews, approximately forty-two percent of young adults felt as if they were either taken for granted, not valued as an adult, or the church had no plan for them. I believe when older members take an interest in the lives of the young adults in their church, these same young adults will take an interest in church. There should be a continuum of potential leaders being recruited by existing leaders. Constantly being on the lookout for new talent keeps existing leaders from becoming entrenched and can

address the issue of people believing that their positions in church belong to them. Taking time to select or recruit youth and young adults into perspective leadership roles allows for us to include them not only into the mission of God, but establishes a way to teach the mission of the local church.

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’” (Matt. 4:18-19, NIV).

Accept

“When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a “sinner.”’” (Luke 19:5-7, NIV).

In this very famous biblical example of acceptance, Jesus stopped and made the point of letting everyone know that he was intending to fellowship with one of the most reviled men of the area. He was not condoning Zacchaeus’ past misdeeds which were many, but he was reaching out to a man who felt all alone. Zacchaeus was not accepted by those who employed him (the Romans) and was ostracized by his own people (the Jews). He was a man “in between.” The African American young adults interviewed felt like they were “in between.” Those older than them as adults did not accept them, and they were too old to still be in the youth group. They wanted to be accepted by their church in a meaningful way, but did not have any formal way of making that happen.

The new expectation is that people will first be accepted into the community of faith and there experience and learn about the Christian faith. Then, in the process of belonging, they will come to a point of belief and finally learn to behave.

Mentor

Too many will reflect their teen years with disappointment and anger because of the absence of meaningful relationships with parents and other adults. Churches that provide mentor relationships as part of their youth ministry not only assist parents but also fill gaps in the adult community's relationships with its adolescents (Dunn and Senter 1997, 639). "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.'" (Matt. 6:9-12, NIV).

In the workplace relationships and in school, the young adults interviewed tended to have been positively impacted by people who they saw as mentors. Mentors can provide a positive impact to the leadership development of African American young adults in local church as well. In order for the mentors to be effective, however, the church would need to either develop a curriculum for mentorship or use existing mentoring literature that is available for youth and adapt it to their young adult population.

Equip

“But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26, KJV).

While we rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us, young adults need to be practically equipped with the tools for church leadership. At this point in their development, young adults are beginning to strike out on their own, seek long term companionship, and use the skills learned in school and translate them to the workplace. The local church must be willing to take up the responsibility of training young adults for church leadership. How can the lessons of Sabbath school and youth group now be applied to leading in a particular aspect of church ministry? Part of this equipping must be the teaching that all work done in the church is ministry.

Send for Service

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matt.28:18-20, NIV).

Making disciples also involves creating a legacy of service for young adults. It requires the local church to create avenues for young adults to be creative in how they want to minister to their friends, the surrounding community, or even within the church walls.

The drawback to the discipleship model rests on the very things that make it successful: the disciple, the mentor, and time/experiences. If the mentor or the disciple comes into the process with a closed mind, a bad attitude, or an ego, the entire process would not be productive. In the end, what would be created is a culture of people who would rather attend a big event or see a charismatic star than develop a 'long obedience' (Evangelism 2011, 15).

The Family-Based Model

This model engages the family in an effort to return to what God originated in the Garden of Eden. Because many of our young adults are already living on their own and are responsible for themselves, this model doesn't seem like it would be advantageous to the development of leadership or using the five practices. Young adults create for themselves family units among their friends from work, school, or church.

The Missional Model

This model is based on the gospel commission to 'go' (Matt. 28:19-20) and the promise from God to fulfill it. Young adults are encouraged to share the gospel now in this world and with their generation (Evangelism 2011, 22). This model employs the practice of inspiring the vision by encouraging young adults to be engaged in activities that would allow them to be the "hands and feet" of Jesus. There is a heavy reliance on God and what can be accomplished through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the young adults.

On a secondary level, visionaries and people of faith can inspire young [adults] to be open to God and to place them where God can minister through them (Evangelism 2011, 22). Young adults would find their value in giving of themselves to others. This model allows young adults to seek out their own opportunities for ministry but does not point to church leadership or even focus on church activity at all. This model can feasibly have young adults constantly engaged in ministry but never engaged in leading in church. The leadership that is developed in this situation is one that is born out of sharing gifts and talents with others.

The Social Advocacy Model

This model presents as a community service model, but moves to the reasons why people need charity to why aren't the homeless able to get work, or why has the government not lived up to its obligations. Young adults do gravitate to causes and find value in being able to put their beliefs to work in helping others. This model relies on passion, perception, and perseverance. Young people have a general sense of justice, but often lack the depth of understanding or the experience to move beyond simple acts of kindness (Evangelism 2011, 26).

This model is also reminiscent of what we noted historically in the growth of urban youth ministry in the late 1950s and all the way through the 1960s. It can inspire but, without a good leader, this can be an exercise in futility that would ultimately do more harm than good. African American young adults desiring to feel like they have value may feel as if they have let others down if they are unable to be successful in this model.

This model also does not promote leadership within the church setting, but it does create community leaders.

The Small Groups Model

Size really does matter; the bigger the group, the greater the performance; the smaller the group, the greater the fellowship. These aren't guarantees; [they are] simply tendencies (Evangelism 2011, 30). While the small groups model creates an avenue for what could be discipleship, mentorship, or fellowship, its purpose is to further personal spiritual growth. This method is valuable in creating spaces where young adults could gain the confidence necessary to lead. Within the small group setting, young adults can be nurtured and encouraged to learn their value. Small groups depend on a strong leader and the commitment of those involved within the group. Without a strong leader, young adults will find something else to do. The leader or facilitator would also need to be a person that young adults believe they can or will be able to trust. Nineteen percent of the negative leadership experiences in my interviews were because of leader failure. Leadership can be taught within the small group, but it doesn't provide the mechanism to lead young adults into local church leadership.

The Cross Cultural Model

This model presents a 'unity within diversity' ethos. It claims that by being clear about the differences that we have as people, we can open pathways to helping each other in following Jesus. It presents a set of four needs:

1. Awareness of Differences—This includes discovering the needs, likes, background, values, expectations, lifestyles, and orientation of those who are different than me/us.
2. Acceptance of Diversity—This involves being open to inclusiveness and embracing others.
3. Agreement on Direction—This might be a lengthy process, but the outcome focuses on working together to mutually meet needs. These needs could be to benefit an individual or the group as a whole, or something beyond the group.
4. Application of Design—This comes down to the practical sharing of experiences. Creating history together.

Within the African American churches, the collective story of people is repeated at least once a year. Where this model can be useful in the development of young adult leaders is that young adults must be able to be aware of their differences between the youth (those younger than them) and the adults (those older than them). Accepting the inter-generational diversity in the church creates an environment where African American young adults should be able to agree on a direction or inspire shared vision. The key to making this model work is personal security in one's identity (Evangelism 2011, 34). At the same time, young adulthood is a time of identity exploration, instability, self focus, and feeling in-between (Arnett 2004, 45). One thing young adults can be sure of is that they are not sure of themselves. They do not have a strong, collectively shared historical moment that helped to define them and which continues to shape their identity (Robbins and Wilner 2001, 12).

Young adults need to have people around them who can help them feel supported in order for them to feel secure. Unfortunately, thirty-five percent of the interview responses in my research study expressed that the church did not have a plan for them, while twenty-nine percent felt like they were taken for granted. Application of the Cross-

cultural model seems that it could address that issue, but it does not create a platform for leadership development.

The Relational Model

This model of ministry can also be referred to as “friendship evangelism.” This model focuses on making relationship creation the focal point of the ministry. The true nature of the model is the relationships created, and not to increase youth/young adult group attendance. Our young adults who reported positive leader experiences had relationships that provided support (fourteen percent) or was approachable and friendly (fourteen percent). Having relationships like these in the local church can create an environment for leadership creation, but does not necessarily get us the next generation of leaders that we are looking for.

Because the relationship model depends on one-on-one relationship creation, there will naturally be some people who are better at it than others. Personality can play a big part in who is being sought after in relationship building. Young adults can easily be caught up in the culture of a personality. The Mosaic generation epitomizes a me-and-we contradiction. To generalize, they are extraordinarily relational and, at the same time, remarkably self-centered... they want to do everything with friends (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 391). You also need a strong enough relational presence to make this the culture of your ministry model (Evangelism 2011, 38).

The Leadership Model

According to the Leadership model, instead of voting young adults onto meaningless church committees or making them leaders of ministries that are inactive in hopes of bringing life to them, allow the young adults to grow ministries from the church and recruit others to join them. We have an example of this from a few of the young adults interviewed, “I’m in charge of the ‘healthy neighborhoods’ project, which is basically medical students and other students from the different schools in Loma Linda. We go out into the San Bernardino community and we have different projects” (AB).

“I am leading out. There’s a Dr. that works at the veteran’s hospital that has a program. He takes inner city youth and brings them to the church and he does basically Sabbath school programs with them. I kind of took some of those kids and started a teen’s class because a lot of the program was designed for smaller kids. So, I just kind of took the older kids and started a program for that” (JS).

This young adult got her friends to join in with what they were doing with the kids every Sabbath. Now JS gets satisfaction from serving the children from the community and having her friends be a part of the ministry. Her part in the ministry was not to start it, but she saw where it could be a little better. She wasn’t required to go to a committee to get it approved. She took the initiative to do what she thought was a small thing. The ministry continues and she can begin to seek out the next leader from within the group or from her friends who joined her.

Existing leaders should perpetually recruit others to join them in leading and lead others to do as well. No official mentoring labels must be assigned in order for mentoring

to take place. Make it a two-way street with young people following and leading interchangeably, as needed, and as the Spirit moves (Evangelism 2011, 42).

In order to make the Leadership model work, there are two ways that we can go about it. One is when a young person responds to a need, like JS. She saw there was a need to have someone work with teens during the community Sabbath School. The other way is for an older member or existing leader to invite a young person to be a part and they are equipped to lead for the future. In the case of MN, she was asked by an older member/leader in the church to participate and now she has led at one level of church activity and is willing to do other things.

The situation in which leadership takes place depends on at least one person following the leader. This happens all the time in unofficial ways, whether it's something as passive as participating or not participating in a given ministry, attending church or not attending, moving towards God or retreating from Him. A person's influence makes that person a leader (Evangelism 2011, 42).

Using the figure from Chapter 2, we can update our leadership transfer with new information that is inclusive of our emerging adult definition, information from the five practices, and leadership model.

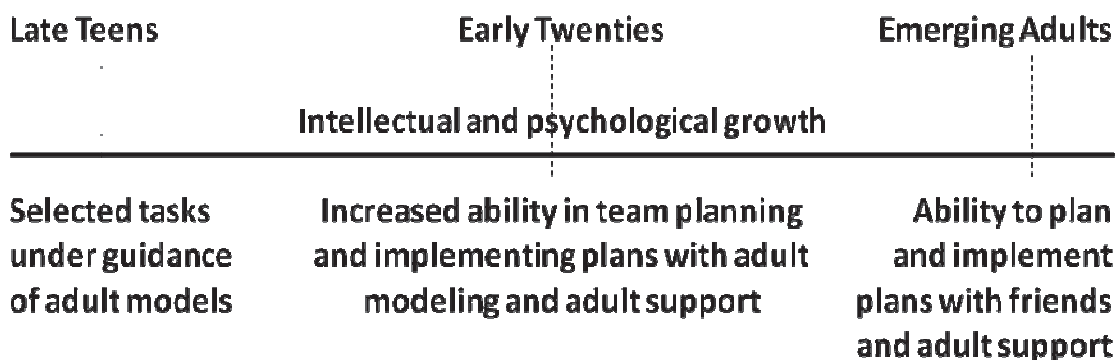


FIGURE 15

NEW LEADERSHIP TRANSFER MODEL
(Brooks 2012)

Summary

Young adults do many things. They look for employment, get work, imagine, dream, obtain degrees, do research, hang out, and party. Many want to travel and have a desire to know and be known. The promise and vulnerability of young adulthood lie in the experience of the birth of critical awareness and the dissolutions and re-composition of the meaning of self, other, world, and “God” (Parks 2000, 133).

Maslow’s discussion of needs and our own investigations into the needs of African American young adults gives us a small window into what they are expecting at this point of their lives. Spiritually, they are developing and implementing values and sorting out the values to which they have been exposed (Evangelism 2011, 80). Socially, they are getting comfortable in their own skin. This period in the lives of twenty-somethings is a time of identity exploration, instability, self-focus, a time of feeling like

they're in-between and, at the same time, seeing the potential for numerous opportunities (Arnett 2004, 45).

In black churches, young adults need to be valued. They need to be trusted and allowed to not have to conform to the conventions of the past. Principle does not have to change when what we are really dealing with is method. More of our young adults are getting increasingly frustrated in churches that do not adequately address societal change. Post-modernity and its extension, post post-modernity, are no longer merely part of academic theory; they are now part of reality. They have infiltrated life as we know it and are not only manifested in magazines, music, TV, and art, but also in the way people relate, communicate, and live their everyday lives (Gane 1997, 20).

In advocating for a more intentional leadership transfer model for young adult ministry, I expect that the local churches in San Bernardino will not only grow the young adults attending their churches, but would be much more attractive to a population that feels like their churches do not always value them as adults.

PART III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 8

A PILOT PROGRAM

From the data in my research and the information from how youth and young adult ministry has developed over the last century, I can agree with the pastor who wrote, “There’s no one size fits all youth culture anymore. That did exist in the first two waves of youth culture. But it is likely that it will never exist again” (Oestreicher 2008, 69). There is no one size fits all in urban young adult ministry either, but I believe that there are some things that can be done in any church setting that will positively address young adults accepting leadership roles.

In most recent days, I have learned that I will be re-assigned to be the lead pastor of a small church in Fontana, California. It is a primarily African American congregation with a number of young adults attending but not in leadership. This chapter will outline a program for integrating the ideas presented in previous chapters into a program that will include the discipleship and leadership models to change the culture of leadership development in my church and which will be reproducible for others.

Culture refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people (Kotter 1996, 1417). Every local church has its own culture. Transforming the culture of a church can be a long process, considering how long those who attend have been holding on to long-held traditions. What follows is a one-year to eighteen-month outline of how I would create a culture of leadership. This outline is not gospel and can be adapted based on where your church already is when it comes to young adult leadership.

Bring the Church on Board

Before I can affect the young adults of the church, it is necessary to make sure that conversations and meetings are held with the current leadership of the church. Whether it is in board meeting or in scheduled meetings with all department heads, there needs to be continued conversation about where I plan to take the church. Since my passion will always be for youth and young adults, it is important for me to share that passion with the leadership. Typically, the change begins with a single powerful person. It spreads from him or her to a few others through example (practice 1, Model the way), produces some group benefit, and then spreads still more widely (Kotter 1996, 1545). I need to invite the stakeholders of the church to join with me to create the culture for young adult leadership.

Creating a Culture of Young Adult Leadership

When I reflect on my own development as a young adult in my home church, I found there were a number of things that helped me develop. They were not always ideal things but, I found that, over time, I had become comfortable dealing with the adults in my church while many of my contemporaries had walked away. It was not because of any better gifts that I had, not because they were friends with my family, or even that they felt sorry for me. What made the difference for me was that older members created relationships with me. Spending time together, doing things that help you get to know one another, and having a consistently servant-like attitude are the building blocks of a trusting foundation (Van Eck 2005, 147).

What we are looking to create in the African American churches in San Bernardino, and actually anywhere for that matter, is a culture of young adult leadership, an environment in the local church that is conducive and accepting of young adults in leadership. The data gave some definite indications of what works and what does not work for young adults currently attending African American churches.

Create Connections

Before I, or anyone, can be seen as a model we must first establish relationship. Within the first three months of this initiative, I plan to establish relationships with the young adults. My plan is to make scheduled and random visits with them. Scheduled meetings can be at an eatery in the area or in the office of the church. The point is not where you are, but why you are. My preference would be to eat with people as often as I can, whether that eating takes place in a home or at a restaurant. We are not meeting for me to sell them on my vision for ministry or for me to convince them to do anything. These first three months are for getting to know each other. What I have found over the years, and even with this research, young adults will almost never turn down a free meal. And, it is with the sharing of a meal that many can allow themselves to be themselves because meals force you to be people oriented instead of task oriented (Chester 2011, 678).

The time we spend eating and getting to know each other is valuable for young adults to be able to feel comfortable around those who would be leading them. Whether you are a visionary, civic, or role model leader, the young adults in your church will not follow you if they cannot connect with you. Give them the opportunities to create

connection. These connections are created through fellowship, non-threatening safe places where we are not bound by the titles of church, but we are people learning about one another with the goal of working together in the future.

It is important that these connections be created in person. While it is good to be able to communicate with young adults via the latest technological apparatus, and they respect those leaders who can, the point of in-person meetings is to stress the idea of value; that the young adults matter to you, the leader. Therefore, within the first three months of creating a culture for young adult leadership, the leader must meet with all the young adults and their friends (where possible).

Set the Agenda

Once we have spent time creating a connection with the young adults, this allows some space to be able to communicate a pathway for joining in church leadership. Because our leadership is church based, the next step would be to teach the values of the church. This teaching can take place weekly, off-campus or at the church. If at the church, the teaching can take the form of a sermon series or a small group set during the Sabbath school time. The main point is that we can show how the church at large shares the values of young adults. Shared values are important concerns and goals shared by most of the people in a group that tend to shape group behavior and that often persist over time, even when group membership changes (Kotter 1996, 1417). We know that when young adults share the values of their church, they are more likely to stay. This is what shared values can do for young adults in the local church (adapted from Kouzes and Pozner):

- They foster strong feelings of personal effectiveness
- They promote high levels of [church] loyalty.
- They facilitate consensus about the key [church] goals
- They promote strong norms about working hard and caring
- They reduce levels of [church] stress and tension
- They foster pride in the [church]
- They facilitate understanding about the [pastor's] expectations
- They foster teamwork

If the values of the church are already in place, then we can move on to the next step in our culture creation. If not, we continue to cultivate the created connections throughout the church and seek God's guidance to hear what values seem to come from the young adults, in particular and the membership at large.

To assist the church in identifying what is meant by values, the pastor can spend time in Bible study and preaching on the subject of identifying values. This process on the values of the church can be repeated when new members join a small group study or a new members' class.

My best guess is that I will need at least six months to start seeing a change in the culture. The church is now learning to connect with each other, based on the example set by the leader. We have set the agenda by identifying the values of the church and how those values intersect with the commonly held values of the young adults in the congregation.

Encourage Innovation

The next three months, I can work on what Kouzes and Posner refer to as challenging the process. The work of leaders is change. And all change requires that leaders actively seek ways to make things better, to grow, innovate, and improve (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 2757). In challenging the process, we want to encourage innovation, reviewing the way things have been done in the past, and taking some time to review what things/ways/systems/processes/ministries we want to change, upgrade, or discard.

As this would be my first assignment as the lead pastor or senior pastor, I want to bring together my current leaders and talk about the past successes of the church; the things that went well and the things that may not have gone as well as they would have liked. We want to take advantage of the opportunity as a committee with a new leader to challenge what has been done before and dream together.

Next, we meet with the young adults who are attending but are not active in any capacity. This meeting would be to question these non-active young adults about what ministry would get their attention. What are the spaces in the church's reach? Do they have ideas of creative or different things that can be employed for ministry? Because leadership is inextricably connected with the process of innovation (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 2785), we expect that new ministries and ministry leaders can be birthed through this process.

Armed with the information from the leadership committee (the Church Board) and the ideas of the non-active young adults, I would now seek to appeal to the hearts and minds of the congregation. We want to find the place of parity where young adults and the church at large can agree on the areas we can be stretched. How can we do this? We

will list our top two or three ministry ideas and begin the process of making those ideas a reality.

As a local church leader, you may want to see your young adults more involved in what is going on at your church or in a young adult small group. Make sure that you have taken the time to hear from the young adults in your context. What are they saying to you when you ask them, “If you could change anything...?” Among the young adults researched for this project, ‘opportunities to lead’ was a common answer when asked about what they would want the church to do for them. Churches tend to be places where ideas go to die. Young adults want to be challenged on what they believe and they want to challenge the way things are done in order to make it their own. To find new leaders and further the culture of leadership creation, leaders must be willing to be tested, allow for outside ideas, and then support young adults as they seek to make their ideas for ministry a reality. Keep looking for opportunities to engage young adults and their ideas within your ministry context.

Build a Winning Team

Once connections have been created with the members and maintained with scheduled and unscheduled visits on a semi-regular basis, there should be increased trust. The agenda has been set before the church. It is one that is not only in harmony with the goals of the leader, the members, but it also incorporates the needs of the young adults. I want to encourage our young adults to collaborate with the church in launching at least two new ministries. Now, we take the next few months to set out a schedule of small wins.

Our interviews reported that young adults felt positive about leadership when they completed successful projects. Our goal in the next few months is to create small successes in the creation of new ministries or the completion of goals in the existing ministries in which young adults are already involved. We can ultimately accomplish big things by succeeding in a number of small things.

For those who might think that building the winning team may be a bit much, especially if you do not have many young adults in your congregations, start with what you have. I have started small groups with young men, mixed groups with youth and young adults, and now a youth group that meets on Friday nights. The first goal, or win, would be to have at least two or three show up for a meeting. At the close of the meeting, advise each person to bring someone else for the next time. Keep this up on a regular basis and you will grow your group. Continue to create small goals for the group to meet: learn a text, meet each other somewhere other than the small group, things like that will build success and get the group comfortable with one another so that when you start introducing ministry ideas, they will have a history of working together and a familiarity that can aid in achieving ministry goals for the church.

Another contributing factor to interviewees having positive leadership experiences was working together with a team. In order for young adults to work together positively, they must be in a climate in which [young adults] are fully engaged and feel in control of their own lives (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 4129). African American young adults struggle with being taken seriously as adults, especially when they do not meet all of the criteria for adulthood that the previous generation find important. According to Arnett, these include: a stable job, living on their own, being in a stable or committed

relationship. It is important to maintain positive experiences within the group to encourage young adults to want to continue in other activities in the future.

When we support our newly developing teams and existing teams by providing training and development, where necessary, we can begin a collaborative effort in church growth that will encourage others to want to be a part of what the young adults are doing in the local church. Young adults will feel valued, know they are being supported and will understand that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between them and the church at large. This mutually beneficial relationship will provide the environment to develop new leaders among the young adults in the local church.

Once our teams have been developed and we have achieved a few wins, it is important to recognize our young adults who have made contributions to the changes taking place within the local church.

Fellowship and Recognition

Outside of conflict, not being valued was the second most popular answer when young adults reflected on their negative feelings about leadership. Personal recognition for a job done and done well can go a long way to support young adults who feel they are not valued. Recognition is about acknowledging good results and reinforcing positive performance (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 4575).

At this point in our desire to create the culture for young adult leadership, we have created connections, learned about the values of the church and the young adults in attendance. We took time to build teams and encourage innovation. We learned how to

have small successes to build collaboration. Now, we must take the time to show how we value all those who have participated in changing the culture.

Because we took the time to create connection, when it comes to recognition, it can be tailor made to those who we have learned about throughout this process. By personalizing recognition, leaders send the message that someone took the time to notice the achievement, seek out the responsible individual, and personally deliver praise in a timely manner (Kouzes and Posner 2007, 4764).

Our celebration at the church can be an award show that is named after the church. The members can write in the types of awards and recognition they want to receive. For others who may be following this outline that I am proposing, it will be important to know the people you want to see recognized. Make your recognition “from the heart” and it never has to be something that is expensive. More people are impacted by the fact that their church recognized them and cared than are impressed by how much money may have been spent on a gift. Young adults need to be valued and supported. Letting them know what their value actually is by word and deed goes a long way toward building the culture for young adult leadership.

Summary

It is my hope that within the first eighteen months in a church with a small group of young adults in attendance, a culture for young adult leadership can be created by creating connection to establish trust. I will endeavor to set an agenda that allows all the members to be included, not just the young adults. I want to encourage young adults to think beyond what they have traditionally experienced as a church. I want to spend time

building winning teams and taking time for recognition. My plan is another way of using the five practices as the underlying principle to leadership development in the local church where I will serve as a pastor.

By using these practices, I hope to create a culture where every member will be valued. I especially want young adults to not only feel valued, but supported and heard. My research has led me to believe that when young adults are valued, heard, and trusted by the leaders of the church, they will stay. Not only will they stay, but they will be active in leadership in different areas.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will outline conclusions based on my research which includes the reasons why young adults are not in leadership in African American churches. Also, we will contrast these reasons with what can be done from the voices of young adults to prepare the next wave of youth who will be taking the journey into young adulthood.

Returning to the CRI

The central research issue was to investigate attitudes, perspectives and experiences of African American young adults towards taking responsible leadership in the local church. What I found was young adults attending churches in San Bernardino who had positive feelings for those who were in leadership, but did not always see themselves as the “up front” type. Young adults would rather work with their peers to accomplish a task, whether that task is a church project or something else.

Emerging Adulthood

As a function of their emerging adulthood, young adults are in transition. The local church can be a powerful influence on young adults when they are valued, supported, challenged, and mentored. I learned that, because many of the African American young adults were in transition, they had needs that the church could meet,

as long as the church understands they need each other. Young adults have the need to be treated like fully realized adults, despite their lack of experience; to know that the church will support them through this time of uncertainty and opportunity. It is important for young adults to know that they belong and that their friends are welcome. Affirmation from the local church and its leadership is very important to the esteem of young adults. Young adults need opportunities to see that their potential can be reached through service in the local church and community.

When the local church shares values with young adults, they are more likely to stay. Church members need to create a connection with the young adults in the church; not just the pastor or the youth pastor.

Successful Models

I was introduced to ten successful models of youth and young adult ministry from the Adventist literature. Of the ten, only one, the Leadership Model, had the outcome of creating leaders. The foundation of the Human Resource frame and the five practices allows for the creation of a culture that would bear young adult leaders. These leaders would be empowered and trained to be mentors to the next generation, creating system of reproducible leaders.

Suppose I Don't Fit?

The descriptions of the types of pastors young adults follow are not definitive. What I detail above is just what came from my research. Suppose you don't find yourself in one of the descriptions above, does that mean that you cannot lead young adults or that

they will never follow you? I don't believe that to be the case. If you do not embody the same characteristics as detailed, you can still be a strong advocate for young adults and they will follow you. There are some strategies, if employed on a large or small scale, that will gain credibility with the young adults in your congregation. There are three things that will change their view of you: create community via the Internet, study the culture of young adults, and learn to lead with transparency.

Internet Community

Traditional leaders tend to be late to engaging with the Internet, fearing the technology's dark side. This is especially true within Adventist ranks. There was a time when going to the movies was listed as a "sinful practice of the world" or "soul-destroying amusement." These ideas tend to keep traditional leaders from readily using the internet to foster community. For these leaders, I would suggest two ways that they can engage their young adults: create a Facebook page and start blogging regularly.

With young adults increasingly choosing to forgo church involvement, many churches are waking up to the need to embrace technology as one more effective tool (Stetzer, Stanley et al. 2009, 1918). Creating a Facebook page or a regular blog will increase your profile among the young adults in your church and allow them to engage with you in a way where you can still set the ground rules. Blogging allows you to write about your most recent preaching series and invite young adults to respond. Having a Facebook page allows you to see what your young adults may be involved in and what moves them to write and update their profile. The Internet will never replace the real community that the church can provide, but it gives leaders a window into what young

adults in their congregation are thinking about and possible subjects to tackle with the church as a whole.

The Internet can also make you aware of trends in pop culture that can have a negative effect on the lives of young adults. It would be necessary to perform cultural exegesis to teach young adults and the church at large about how trends are interpreted through the lens of Scripture.

Cultural Exegesis

Seminary study and undergraduate theological degrees prepare pastors to exegete the text of the biblical record in the original languages, learn about historical implications and customs that inform the characters of pre- and post-Christ eras. The same acumen developed to study Scripture can be applied to studying the culture that not only embraces the church but is especially targeting emerging adults dealing with transition and starting to get a hang of how the world works.

When I was in Seminary studying youth ministry, exegeting culture was a regular assignment. As long as you are working in an urban environment, there are going to be aspects of that environment that we have to parse through using a gospel-centric lens.

There are books that help in the discipline of exegeting culture:

- *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* by Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor
- *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* by Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter
- *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue, 2nd ed.*, by Robert K. Johnston
- *Hip-Hop Redemption: Finding God in the Rhythm and the Rhyme* by Ralph Basui Watkins

- *Personal Jesus: How Popular Music Shapes Our Souls* by Clive Marsh and Vaughan S. Roberts

This list is by no means exhaustive, but can put the leader in a position to better engage emerging adults, those termed as nomads and exiles (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011, 328) and show them where Jesus has already appeared in their everyday lives. By showing Jesus in the everyday, you can now show the emerging adults of your congregation that you can be authentic and real.

Transparency

Another way of looking at transparent leadership is to lead with authenticity. Young adults in your congregation want to know that you will not be fake with them or the church. In a media landscape that is filled with reality shows and scandal magazines, young adults want to know that the leaders they see and want to become are real. The following is a good rule of thumb when it comes to leading transparently to affect emerging adults toward leadership.

Leadership is about motivating people to achieve meaningful and purposeful things in their own lives and also in the lives of others. Being transparent literally means to “allow the light to shine through.” Put them together—leadership transparency is influencing others to change and make an impact by allowing the light to pass through who you are (Stetzer, Stanley et al. 2009, 2301)

Being transparent does not mean that you are making your life an open book, but that you are willing to open the book of your life for further review when the need arises. It is about being willing to share your hurts, hang ups, and heartaches. It involves being open and honest with a purpose—a purpose that is redemptive and developmental, a

purpose that allows the light to shine through who you really are so that [young adults] are impacted (Stetzer et al. 2009, 2311) to be leaders in the local church.

Even if you do not find yourself having all the traits of the types of leaders that urban young adults would follow, all is not lost. As long as you are willing to use social media to create connection, use your study skills to exegete contemporary urban culture, and are willing to be transparent, you can still have a positive effect on the young adults in your congregation and prepare them for leadership.

Additional Research and Next Steps

While conducting interviews and focus groups of the African American young adults in San Bernardino County, there were a few items of interest that may be the impetus for further research. These subjects and topics were outside of the scope of what I could accomplish during this research period and may become a part of my post-doctorate work.

Further Research into the Other Counties in the SECC

Since my research focused on the San Bernardino County area, there are still three other counties that are covered by the SECC. Continued research into the development of young adult leaders in those counties can be a joint effort between our youth department and myself. This research will be ongoing as we seek to find ways to not only revitalize young adults in ministry in the local church, but to seek to begin a program that would support that development.

FYBY

Building on the foundation laid by my plan for the local church, I plan to roll out a revamped FYBY program to the Associate Youth Director for the coming year and rolling it out with the aid of the young adults in San Bernardino County. The resulting program and leadership training may not continue to use the same title as the former, allowing a new generation of youth and young adults to have something that is truly their own.

Urban Youth Ministry

I plan to continue writing on the struggles, trials, joys, and frustrations of urban youth and young adult ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To this end, I have created a blog and will be investigating publishing a version of this dissertation.

Passing the Baton

One of the ideas that surfaced not only in my research, but also as I discussed my research with colleagues in this area is the desire to critically look at whether or not culture makes a difference as to whether young people will get involved in church leadership. The question has to do with the impact of 1st generation versus 2nd generation immigrants to the US.

Mentoring

I will continue to research the creation of a mentoring program for at-risk young adults that are aging out of the foster/Kinship Care system in the cities of San Bernardino

and Rialto. There is a real need in the Fontana, Rialto, and San Bernardino cities for people to provide mentoring to this population.

Final Thought

I started on a journey to learn more about the young adults in my local area of San Bernardino because I noticed a lack of involvement and leadership. Although I have learned that there are many factors that contribute to the lack of young adults in our churches, none is more glaring than the fact that our lives have become so busy that many members are more worried about ‘me and mine’ rather than ‘you and yours.’

Historically, within the African American tradition, regardless of denomination, community was the most important thing. We worked hard to keep connected with one another. As a people and as a Church, we sought to be “our brother’s keeper” and hold one another accountable. Our local churches can still be the places that rally our communities. When we make them safe places and place a premium on using the talent, drive and creativity of our youth and young adults, I believe the community will be a better place where God is glorified, people are edified, and the Devil is horrified.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your attitude toward leadership in the/your church?
 - a. How do you define leadership?
 - b. What does it mean to lead?
 - c. Are you involved in leading others?
2. Why do you feel the way that you do about leadership?
 - a. Have you had bad experiences leading at church/school/work?
 - b. Have you had good experiences leading at church/school/work?
3. Is there anything that has helped you to develop as a leader?
 - At work?
 - In school?
 - At church?
4. How do you think the/your church could help you be a leader?
5. Where do you think the/your church dropped the ball in your development as a leader?

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW

Black Adventist young adults and their attitudes toward leadership
at the local church level in the Southeastern California Conference

Greetings _____,

I am conducting research for an academic project and would be grateful for your participation. The purpose of the research project is to understand and detail the attitudes of young adults in the Black churches of the Southeastern California Conference. I hope to use this research to develop a leadership transfer model that can prepare young people for leadership at local church level.

If you would be interested in participating in this project with me by allowing me to interview you about your own story, how you became a leader and the things in your life that have had an effect on your personal leadership, I would be very grateful. If you have any questions about this research project, please don't hesitate to call me at 909-800-9062.

If you would like to agree to participate in this project, please just sign and date this form so that I can schedule an appointment with you to come for an interview.

Yours in Service,

Delroy A. Brooks

APPENDIX C

YOUTH PASTOR QUESTIONS

(Not necessarily written in the order the questions were asked)

1. Name—Age—Ministry role
2. At what age did you begin in local church leadership?
3. Was there someone who helped you or who was influential in that decision?
4. How did you come to be involved in church leadership? (Were you asked or did you volunteer?)
5. How long have you been involved in leadership? And, how long have you served at your current position?
6. Describe your role currently.
7. Could you draw a timeline of important events or milestones in your spiritual/ ministry/leadership journey?
8. Who are the people who have been influential in your development as a Christian? What made those people significant? (Was it their example or something they said?)
9. Who are the people who have been the most influential in your development as a leader? What made those people influential? (Was it their example or something they said?)
10. Have you experienced a moment or a confirmation of a divine call on your life? If so, please describe the experience.
11. What do you believe are the characteristics of a good Christian leader? A good Adventist leader? (Explain in as much detail as possible)
12. Finish the sentence
 - a. A good leader _____
 - b. The perfect age to begin in leadership is _____
 - c. I wish more young adults _____
 - d. If I had my way _____
13. What role has your church played in your development in ministry?
14. Did your church have a formal or informal way of developing leaders?
15. Do you think the church should have a leadership development strategy?
16. What would/should this strategy look like?

APPENDIX D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP

Black Adventist young adults and their attitudes toward leadership at the local church level in the Southeastern California Conference

Greetings _____,

I am conducting research for an academic project and would be grateful for your participation. The purpose of the research project is to understand and detail the attitudes of young adults in the Black churches of the Southeastern California Conference toward leadership. I hope to use this research to develop a leadership transfer model that can prepare young people for leadership at the local church level.

I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group of your peers. If you would be interested in participating in this project with me by allowing me to ask you about your own story, how you view leadership, and the things in your life that have had an effect on your personal leadership, I would be very grateful. This group will be recorded and no names will be used to maintain anonymity of the focus group members. The information presently is for the purpose of developing a leadership transfer model that can be used in the local churches of the SECC.

If you have any questions about this research project please don't hesitate to call me at 909-800-9062. If you would like to agree to participate in this project, please just sign and date this form.

Delroy A. Brooks

Sign and date

APPENDIX E
PROTOCOL FOR FOCUS GROUPS

1. Are your parents married or divorced?
2. Are you a 1st generation American?
3. Have you ever been asked to lead in any aspect at your church? If so, tell me what happened.
4. Tell me, what do you think of the current leadership of your local church?
5. What would you do to change it?
6. How long have you been attending your church?
7. What characteristics are necessary to lead at your church?
8. Are there any young leaders at your church, I mean, people who are the same age as you are now?
9. Who are the best leaders you know and what is their relation to you?
10. Does your church have a formal or informal way to get young adults into leadership positions?
11. Finish the sentence
 - a. A good leader _____
 - b. The perfect age to begin in leadership is _____
 - c. I wish more young adults _____
 - d. If I had my way _____

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP CODING

	La Sierra 1	La Sierra 2	San Bernardino 1	San Bernardino 2	San Bernardino 3
Group	FGLS1	FGLS2	FGSB1	FGSB2	FGSB3
Male	FGLS1a	FGLS2a	FGSB1a	FGSB2a	FGSB3a
Female	FGLS1b	FGLS2b	FGSB1b	FGSB2b	FGSB3b

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VITA

Delroy A. Brooks was born in New York and spent his early education in public schools of Queens, New York. After his undergraduate education at Oakwood University in Huntsville AL, he returned to his home church, Linden SDA Church, in Laurelton, NY, to work with the youth. He served as youth leader, Sabbath school teacher and was ordained as a local elder in 1997. After responding to the call of God to enter ministry full time, he followed the call to the Seventh Day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, MI, to study youth ministry.

Delroy has served the church faithfully for over 15 years, first as a volunteer, now as a pastor. He has served as youth & young adult pastor at the Valley Fellowship SDA church in Rialto, CA. He currently serves as the pastor of the Juniper Ave SDA church in Fontana, CA. He also serves as a resource person for the Southeastern California Conference in the area of youth ministry.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science & Business Information Systems from Oakwood University, a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI, and will receive a Doctor of Missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary in June 2013.